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ABSTRACT

This booklet is part of a multi-video and print package entitled "Realizing America's Hope,' which is intended to help America respond to the challenges facing its youth. Strategies are provided for promoting community-school collaboration. A sample agenda is provided for the first meeting of collaboration, and tips for successful collaboration are included. The change process is described in five steps. The first step deals with defining a vision. After this comes defining current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; the forces that will either help or hinder pursuit of the vision. Step three involves setting goals. If a vision is a picture of the future, then goals are described as the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle which, when taken together, will produce that picture. Step four, developing strategies, involves three levels of work: (1) researching the options; (2) analyzing the options; and (3) deciding what to do. Step five involves action planning. It is noted that decision making involves the determination of who will do what, when. The next section of the booklet focuses on getting started with the collaborative process. Specific suggestions are included from the perspective of school personnel, parents and families, business people, significant others, and students. Additional resources, acknowledgements, and a listing of the video and print components are included in appendices. (LLL)

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LET'S DO IT OUR WAY: WORKING TOGETHER FOR EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

REALIZING AMERICA'S HOPE

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Let's Do It Our Way:
Working Together for Educational Excellence

A Handbook for Community-School Collaboration
for the Educational Betterment of All Our Children

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REALIZING AMERICA'S HOPE

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REALIZING AMERICA'S HOPE is made up of six video broadcasts—the prime time specials: **All Our Children with Bill Moyers**, produced by Public Affairs Television, Inc., and **Responding to 'All Our Children'—Bill Moyers Live from Longstreet Theatre**, produced by South Carolina ETV; two teleconferences: **Investing in Our Youth: A Nationwide Committee of the Whole** and **Making the American Dream Work for Our Children: A New Vision of School Guidance**, produced by S.C. ETV; and two half-hour documentaries, **Investing in Our Youth** and **Making the American Dream Work for Our Children**, edited from the case studies produced for the two teleconferences.

This is the latest project funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and managed by MDC, Inc., a nonprofit agency concerned with strengthening the workforce, examining the concerns of youth. MDC's 1985 report, *Who's Looking Out for At-Risk Youth*, and 1988 report, *America's Shame, America's Hope: Twelve Million Youth at Risk*, led to a 1989 national teleconference, **America's Shame, America's Hope**, hosted by Bill Moyers.

Two additional publications have been produced to accompany the teleconferences. *Changing Delivery Systems: Addressing the Fragmentation in Children and Youth Services*, prepared by the Education Commission of the States and the National Conference of State Legislatures, examines the concerns explored in **Investing in Our Youth: A Nationwide Committee of the Whole** and *Guiding Youth to Success: What Schools and Communities Can Do*, prepared by MDC, Inc., accompanies **Making the American Dream Work for Our Children: A New Vision of School Guidance**. For information on how to obtain copies of these videos and other publications, see page 51.

Other organizations participating in REALIZING AMERICA'S HOPE along with MDC, Inc., S.C. ETV, Public Affairs Television, Inc., the Education Commission of the States and the National Conference of State Legislatures include the Public Television Outreach Alliance, the National Media Outreach Center and the National School Boards Association.

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Let's Do It Our Way: Working Together for Educational Excellence is for parents, teachers, students, civic leaders, church leaders, business folk and all the rest of us . . .

From it you will learn, among other things:

- how to find and use a *cat*,
- how to employ the art of *synchronicity*,
- how to overcome the *Sinatra Factor*,
- how to handle the *River City Effect* and much more, we hope,
- and how to utilize your own *SWOT* team.

But most of all, you'll learn:

- how to pick a fight that's big enough to matter and small enough to win . . . and then how to win it . . . and how not to stop there.

DEFINITIONS

Cat: Short for catalyst—a *cat* is a person who is crucial to the art of collaboration because she/he is (1) highly committed, (2) skilled in interpersonal relationships, (3) patient and good at creating consensus, (4) a self-starter and hard worker and, most important, (5) aware that there is no end of the good you can do if you are only willing to let someone else take the credit. (See page 8.)

Synchronicity: From the writings of novelist Arthur Koestler as adapted by Earl Nightingail, the film and radio motivation expert, *synchronicity* means "the coming together of seemingly unrelated events and people that bring about situations previously hoped for." (See page 12.)

The Sinatra Factor: The creation of Sid Gardner, director of the California Tomorrow youth-at-risk project. *The Sinatra Factor* refers to the moment at the beginning of a collaboration when someone used to being obeyed says, in effect, "It's time we did it my way." It's time, then, to get some help from people skilled in collaboration, who know that it only works if it is done "our way." (See page 10.)

The River City Effect: The idea that whatever it is won't work because "we've never done it that way around here." A skillful collaborator helps this person see that's because it didn't occur to us before, and that now River City is the perfect place to do it exactly right, for everybody else to see and marvel at. (See page 8.)

SWOT: Acronym standing for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats—the forces that will either help or hinder you in the pursuit of your vision. A *SWOT* analysis is a quick and dirty way of answering some important questions basic to every good planning effort. (See page 17.)

How to Pick a Fight That's Big Enough to Matter and Small Enough to Win and then to win it and then not to stop there. (See page 10.)

INTRODUCTION

Sally catches the school bus and gets to school every day but she is tired and hungry before the day even begins. Her mother works two jobs, one at night, and nobody's up to fix Sally breakfast. Often Sally's older sister and her older sister's boyfriend have friends over at night while Sally's mother is working, so Sally doesn't get a lot of sleep. Sally's only eight but she knows a lot. Privately, she wishes her mother would get married again.

Fernando was doing okay in school before the peer pressure took over and he got into drugs. Now Fernando could get to school on his new motorbike but he doesn't bother. It was a hassle before and it would be a hassle now, the way he figures. He's 14 and now he knows he can take care of himself anyway.

Willie Mae doesn't do drugs, doesn't look for trouble, gets enough food and sleep, but she has another problem about getting to school. Her problem is named Teresa, her 16-month-old daughter. She can't find day care for Teresa and the school has no answers for that, so mostly Willie Mae stays home. She will be 16 next year and then, she figures, nobody will care whether she goes to school or not. Not that anyone seems to care much now.

What Sally and Fernando and Willie Mae have in common are problems their schools can't solve alone. These young people need help from somewhere outside the schools and the schools need that help in the name of their students. You can read the names of these helpers between the lines of Sally and Fernando and Willie Mae's stories—drug counselors, day care specialists, parents, social workers, an adult friend who cares and shows it. They need a community ready to collaborate and a school that is ready to welcome this collaboration—a school, in short, prepared to find ways to educate all of its students, not just those who come well-rested, well-scrubbed and culturally and educationally prepared.

An old African proverb says it more eloquently than we ever could: "It takes a whole village to raise a child." That sums up the what and the why of collaboration. The job of supporting children to achieve in school and in life is too big a task for families, schools and community institutions to tackle alone. The whole village has to come together to do the job.

This handbook is about that kind of collaboration. It tells you what collaboration is, how to be a part of the process of getting one started (or plugging into one already under way), and how to avoid the pitfalls and ambushes that can block progress. This handbook is for *you*. That's right. *You* principal of a school, *you* school board member, *you* teacher, *you* businessperson, *you* churchgoer, *you* parent (especially *you*) and *you* student and all of *you* who qualify as "none of the above." Whether you live in a mighty city or a tiny village or any of the stops in between. Whether or not you have children in school or anywhere else. You will find a section of this handbook especially designed to help you get involved.

It was put together by the staff of MDC, Inc., a nonprofit organization working for over 20 years in the field of employment training and education of disadvantaged Americans. MDC staff traveled from coast to coast to look at collaborative efforts, made telephone contact with dozens more, and read the available literature. The bad news is that very little provably successful, full-blown collaboration is going on today. The good news is that dozens of efforts are starting up, that considerable attention is being paid to how they are faring, that a cadre of "experts" on the subject has been developed—many of them named,

with phone numbers, in our appendix—and that there is general agreement that collaboration is an idea whose time at last has come. If we're right about that last, it's not a bit too soon. We are in deep trouble in this country. Dropout rates are calculated 30 ways to the dozen, but the simple truth is that something like one out of three of our youth is finishing high school (by graduation or dropout) with basic skills so limited that they will not be able to make their way successfully in today's sophisticated job market. We need far more members of our workforce with at least some college—13.5 years of education will be needed by the year 2000 for the average job. Sally and Fernando and Willie Mae are among the million or so young people television journalist Bill Moyers said we Americans were "burying alive" every year on his 1989 program based on MDC's report, *America's Shame, America's Hope: Twelve Million Youth at Risk.*

"We have to find the will power to reach and teach all of our children . . . This is a task that with the greatest good will in the world, the schools cannot do alone."

In the *America's Shame* report, we stressed that the problem is in every American's lap. This country's overall economic health depends upon having a skilled, well-educated workforce. Without it, we simply can't and won't compete with countries already well ahead of us in overall educational attainment. We need to take action to save Sally and Fernando and Willie Mae. And we also need the Sallys and Fernandos and Willie Maes in order to help build a future for ourselves and our own children.

This means that we have to find the will power to reach and teach all of our children, to teach them better than in the past for far more difficult jobs than were there in the past. This is a task that, with the greatest good will in the world, the schools cannot do alone. It is a job that can only be done with the deep involvement of community and family in schools, and that means collaboration.

Browse this handbook if you like. But ask yourself—here's a good place to ask yourself—whether it's not worth an hour of your time to find out how others are dealing with a critical problem common to all of us. One hour to learn how to do it your way, which means how to do it our way, because the art of collaboration is learning how to multiply the magical number, one.

As the Education Commission of the States has observed, "School is the natural emotional, political and cultural center of the neighborhood." That's why the neighborhood—the community—is so important to the school. It's wise to remember that when we complain about schools, we are complaining about our own performance. As the taxpayers who pay the bills and the voters who elect the school board, we're the boss. To put it another way, in the vernacular of Pogo, to the extent we are unhappy with our schools— "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

HOW DO AMERICA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS MEASURE UP TO THE GOALS THE NATION HAS SET? THEY HAVE SET FOR THEMSELVES?

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan called for the nation to achieve a high school graduation rate of 90 percent by 1990.

- 1982: The graduation rate was only 69.7 percent.
- 1988: Six years later, and the latest year for which data are currently available, and it had only increased to 71.2 percent.

So now it is 1991 and we've missed the boat badly on the Reagan goals. Noting the slow rate of progress, in early 1990, President George Bush and the nation's governors met in Virginia. They set goals of their own, among them:

- By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn.
- By the year 2000, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent. (In other words, we'll get there 10 years later than President Reagan thought . . . maybe.)
- By the year 2000, U.S. students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.
- By the year 2000, every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so that they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

Note first that we are talking now about education for the 21st century, not even a decade away. Can these goals be reached? Or are we indulging in yet another exercise in wishful thinking?

The answer to these questions is maybe and maybe not. Certainly we have ample evidence that students at individual schools can be assisted in dramatically improving their performance. Consider the example of Banning High in Los Angeles. (See page 2.) But for a clear "yes" and "no," two things have to happen fairly rapidly in widespread fashion across the country:

1. **Communities have to begin to take responsibility for the education of their children and be willing to help schools by assisting them in getting students ready to be educated.**
2. **Schools have to encourage and accept community involvement, come to believe that *all* students can be educated, and begin adapting education to the learning styles of these students rather than expecting the students to adapt to traditional school teaching style.**

BANNING HIGH SCHOOL, LOS ANGELES, CA

In 1975, a teacher named Phyllis Hart found herself assigned as a college counselor at Banning, a sprawling, inner-city school which at that time had a school population about 40 percent black and 40 percent Hispanic. She quickly found that she was dealing with three different groups—first, with the small minority of kids who had gone on to college and were back at Banning to complain to someone that they were way over their heads; second, with the innocents who showed up in her office supposedly bound for college but utterly without the courses required; third, the huge majority, silent and glum, going nowhere and aware of it. Ms. Hart convinced the principal that these minority kids could take college core curriculum and succeed at it if they signed—and their parents signed—a contract saying that they would work and their parents would provide time and space for them to work. The school signed the contract, too, pledging to help these students be successful in the new curriculum. Banning, which had been sending only about five percent of its graduates to college and which offered honors courses to only 30 sophomores each year, enrolled 200 youth in the new college core curriculum, raised that to 500, then to 1,100 by the third year. Another outcome was that advanced placement offerings grew from one to 12 courses. Within three years, the college-going rate had climbed to 65 percent. Helen Monahan, one of Hart's colleagues in the original project and in charge of the current program at Banning, says that it has changed the delivery of instruction at the school but that some teachers at the school and many more from other schools "still can't accept the key thing here, which is that we take these kids in the college core curriculum only on their expressing desire, with their parents' support, not based on any testing or previous classroom performance."

We'll come back to these two points in the next chapter, but for now, it's worth asking what the "good" schools we visited across the country look like, and what makes them work.

WHAT DO GOOD SCHOOLS LOOK LIKE?

The "good" schools we saw didn't assume that the students were there to adapt to their teaching methods. They assumed it was their job to learn how to teach the students. If you walk into a good school, sometimes you can tell right away. Something about it . . .

School staff—teachers, counselors, the principal—are greeted in a friendly manner by students as they pass. ("To put it another way," says one inner-city school principal we know, "you don't feel like you're walking through a war zone.")

When principal JoAnne Benson walks through the corridors of John Bayne Elementary School, students run to her for hugs, words of encouragement, and a chance to brag about their classroom accomplishments.

Classes tend to be different sizes (and sometimes last different lengths of time) and students are attentive and participatory in group discussion. They seem not so much being talked at as involved in a process.

On some days at Parkway South High School in the suburbs of St. Louis, English classes are twice as long as math classes. Teachers work out the schedule among themselves.

Students seem to be taking in the full range of the school's social and educational life, from making announcements and presentations from the auditorium stage during assemblies to monitoring their own classroom behavior.

Drew Elementary School students in Miami start their day with a student-produced and directed television news program.

It's not unusual to see people from the world outside the schoolroom walking down the hall or entering the classrooms or assembly halls—all kinds of people, social workers, businessmen and women, lawyers, entertainers.

Job Readiness Training instructor JoAnn Allen has more than 30 guest speakers each year in her Southwest Edgecombe County (North Carolina) High School.

Authority seems to prevail because of this positive behavior but it is hard to see this authority; it seems to come with the approval and collaboration of the students themselves.

HOW DO SCHOOLS GET THIS WAY? WHAT IS THE SECRET?

It does not appear that there is any one model of a good school. But there are things many good schools do that seem to make a difference.

They have high expectations for success for their students and let the students know that they are expected to succeed. They reward academic achievement at every level as readily as athletic achievement.

At Port St. Joe and Wewahitchka High Schools in the Florida Panhandle, honor roll students receive "gold cards" which entitle them to free admission to school functions such as football games and 10-percent discounts on merchandise purchased from cooperating "gold card" businesses.

They have succeeded in providing "school membership" for their students. This replaces the adversarial relationship that too often exists between the school and the students. They know the power of reward—the value of insignia and prizes and the value of helping young people organize their own school "events" such as outings, picnics and cultural forays. They give kids a sense of "belonging" to the school and of the school "belonging" to them.

In Birmingham, AL, youth meeting weekly on advisory councils plan four or five school assembly programs each year and set up student support clubs and after-school activities.

They are less interested in imparting random information to their students than in teaching them how to think, how to solve problems, and also how to work together—collaboratively if you will—as they will have to do in the outside world.

(See Paula Evans' story on page 4.)

What does it mean for the student to be the "worker" and the teacher to be the "coach"? One night Nicholas, my 16-year-old son who is a junior in high school, was preparing for an English quiz. He came to read me the 10-line definition of "allegory" which he had been given to learn. I said, "Wow, that's complicated. Do you know what it means?" He shrugged. I said, "Can you put it in your own words?" He looked at me with mild disgust and said, "Mom, you just don't get it. The point is not to put it in my words but to keep it in his." That kind of note regurgitation will not serve Nicholas well in the long run, nor will it teach him much about allegory.

Let's turn the class around. Give Nicholas the chance to read and talk about several allegories, ask him to write an allegory, and take him through several drafts of that piece of writing, let his peers read his writing and help him with it, ask the class to come up with a definition or several definitions of allegory, perhaps dramatize an allegory, and allegory takes on an entirely different meaning. Teaching and learning take on different meanings. Nicholas assumes much more responsibility in the second class. He is forced to work harder and, in the beginning, he may not like it much. It is easier for my son—for most kids—to memorize a 10-line definition than it is to read, write, speak and listen as he would be required to do in that more complicated, and by far messier, class. Nicholas would have to be the worker.

What about the role of the teacher? Creating a classroom in which the student is the worker demands original thought, perhaps a reconceptualization of the material being taught and the purposes of the classroom. It allows the teacher to join the students in the learning process. It says to the teacher: You are doing too much of the work. Slow down. Less is more. How can you change the content and the format of your classroom so that your students are doing more? How can you move from center stage?

Paula Evans
State Education Leader
Spring 1990

The principal, faculty and staff, have the authority to act at the building level to decide how to teach their students and they invite heavy input from teachers, particularly, to this end . . . they are not afraid to learn from their students now and then either.

"We had a think-crazy team," says former South Bronx Principal Lorraine Monroe. "Once a month we'd brainstorm things to do to enrich our students' lives. That empowered other people in the building to say, 'Listen, this principal is real. You give her a suggestion that's going to move kids, and she acts on it.'"

They use "parent power" to help them motivate the students and bring the family into the school setting. Some schools see themselves as educating the family as a way of educating the whole child.

In Kentucky's PACE program, young mothers bring their preschoolers with them to literacy classes offered at the elementary school. Mothers learn how to encourage their children's learning and how to become advocates for their children's education.

Their "counseling" component is not just one beleaguered soul dealing with "college and crisis" but a team-oriented effort involving teachers and counselors and significant others inside and outside the school. This effort is designed to give the student a vision of personal academic success, to help remove barriers to that success, and to raise self-esteem.

At Apopka High in Orange County, FL, every student and 17 peers meet monthly with a teacher or administrator assigned as a special counselor for career planning and school coping techniques. Students remain with the same "counselor" for four years.

They make the fullest possible use of the school buildings, sometimes keeping them open from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m., with after-school activities ranging from "extended school" for students who have day jobs to parent-teacher activities.

Louis Armstrong Middle School in New York attracts 300 students to an Early Bird program before school and keeps doors open after school hours for tutoring provided by a community-based organization. On Saturdays, enrichment classes are offered. In the summertime, the school is used for teacher workshops.

They have managed to get an early start on learning, supplementing Head-Start programs with locally-funded pre-kindergarten programs, often mixing children from economically disadvantaged families with others who are not.

The McSmiles program in McDowell County, NC, has no criteria for entrance beyond being a preschooler. It operates out of an old school bus and draws on contributions from business and the parents.

They employ "mentoring" programs at all levels possible—high school students to coach and counsel preschool or elementary kids, peer mentoring in supervised in-school groups, and after-school programs where adult role models help youth sharpen study habits and learn about life. They recognize that sometimes for a kid from a typical poor home, today the most important thing is an adult friend who lends positive support and influence.

In San Antonio, high-risk middle school students participating in the Valued Youth Partnership program tutor elementary students for pay. Achievement scores and self-esteem have increased for both groups of students.

They have geared to an individual "achievement" model, with every student having access to materials and computers that make learning at one's own speed possible. They know that academic achievement is the single most important motivator for youth who have not enjoyed academic success in the past. They also know that every kid is good at something and able to move ahead on his/her own projects.

At South Division High School in Milwaukee, where business helped the school set up a network of 190 state-of-the-art computer systems, high-risk students are also offered the chance to mix course-work with real-world experience at the local Harley-Davidson plant. Students spend an hour in class and another on the job before returning to their regular classes at school. Attendance is up and so are grades.

They have not abandoned their dropouts or others of their student body who have left school unsuccessfully. They are working with recovery programs both inside and outside the school system. They know that the initials JTPA stand for the Job Training Partnership Act, this nation's program to assist disadvantaged youth in sharpening academic skills, learning about the world of work, and finding meaningful employment. They work with JTPA and community action groups in their hometown.

In many North Carolina schools, the Extended Day program recruits dropouts back to school for smaller classes offered around part-time job schedules to enable students to earn their high school diplomas.

Most of all they utilize the full community inside and outside the school building to help keep the students going to school—business people for work- shadowing programs and part-time jobs but also for advice and counsel to students; community colleges, junior colleges and universities to help connect finishing students to further education; the social agencies for their vital services; churches, often willing and able to supply supportive people power; grassroots or community action organizations, well aware of where the pressure points for power are in the community; and parent-organized groups to help the schools get needed facilities and to provide students with organized school-related activities.

If your school or schools look like the ones we described above, you don't need this handbook—the odds are that you already have a strong community-school collaboration. But if your school or schools don't graduate 90 percent with the kinds of skills needed to further their education or enter the labor market at the top end and send at least 50 percent on to higher education, and if you don't see much collaboration going on in your community, please read on. Read on, as well, if these rates are not just as applicable to your minority students as to your majority students. (Truth is, we want you to read on under any circumstance, because the country will need as many schools as possible performing beyond the 90-percent graduation rate to assure a favorable position in the turn-of-the-century economy.)

How do you create this community and family involvement, this collaboration? Does it come from the outside into the schools or from the inside of the schools outside to the community? Does it come from the superintendent and school board or from the faculty and staff?

The answers seem to be: Lots of ways and "yes" to all the rest. It can begin inside the schools, inside a single school, inside a school superintendent's office and spread out to the community. It can begin in the community and make its way into the schools. It can begin with a principal, a businessperson, a teacher, a counselor, an advocate outside the system. It can be stimulated by money from afar in the form of a grant, or it can begin with no visible money at all. It can begin at the policy level. It can begin at the classroom level.

But however it begins, it must proceed at all times in a collaborative manner. Change—educational change at least—does not occur by executive order. Woe to the state superintendent of schools who decides how he wants the state's schools to behave and tries to do it by fiat. Woe to the outside change "agent" who decides to "straighten out those school people."

Truth is, collaboration can't proceed just from the administrative level because, well, that doesn't sound collaborative to the folks at the classroom level. It can't work just from the classroom level because that threatens the folks in policy positions. It can't work just from inside the school and it certainly will get nowhere just from outside the school.

It's a little like the principle of Yin and Yang, where opposites complement and grow out of each other and the "whole" is a never-ending process of coming into being. In other words, wherever collaboration starts, it had better involve the two ends working like fury to involve everybody in between and to meet in the middle.

But of course before we can discuss the process, we have to know what collaboration really is and how it can affect the lives of our Sallys and Fernandos and Willie Maes and produce an American workforce for the 21st century.

We've said that two things have to happen for America to begin to reach and teach all of its public school students. Let's look at them again:

- Communities and families have to take responsibility for the education of their children and be willing to help schools by assisting them in getting students ready to be educated.

- Schools have to encourage and accept community and family involvement, come to believe that all students can be educated, and begin adapting education to the learning styles of these students rather than expecting the students to adapt to traditional school teaching styles.

We've also noted that while no true, full-scale collaboration between a community and its schools apparently exists yet in this country, many encouraging efforts are under way. Generally speaking, the initial impetus for change has come from outside the school systems themselves. That's not surprising, as change agents are usually needed to prepare the ground for change in any institution. As someone has observed, in a priesthood like education, or law, or medicine, we cannot expect the priests to be the first to see the need for change.

It's understandable in these circumstances that pieces of collaboration exist in many different settings around the country—schools that have good rapport with their parents, social agencies that have overcome turf problems to present a unified service front, and the like. This is good. In every cooperative act lies the seed for a full-blown collaboration. But while we will point with pride to many of these less-than-full collaboration efforts as we go along, it is the real thing that interests us most.

HOW DOES COLLABORATION HAPPEN?

What then is a community-school collaboration? How would we define it? What elements must it have to succeed?

Here is a working definition from *The Community Collaboration Manual* from the National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations:

> "Collaboration results from the process by which organizations make an informal or formal commitment to work together over a period of time on one or more identified needs or problems. Collaboration requires understanding of the need, vision of how the collaboration members can collectively respond to the need, a decision-making process, and commitment to provide or seek resources to work on the mutually identified need."

Understanding the need, vision, a decision-making process and commitment—all these are critical elements of collaboration. What we are seeking to create is a single master link that works between the schools and the colleges, between industry and its potential workforce in the schools, between social agencies and the schools, between the parent and the community in the schools. Because, as former Iowa state Senator Charlie Bruner has said, "Collaboration is a process to obtain goals that cannot be obtained singly . . . As a process, collaboration is a means to an end, not an end itself." Later on, we'll explore a process that you can use to make sure your collaboration touches all the bases.

How do school-community (or community-school) collaborations actually happen, then?

We went to the pros for the answer to this question. We asked people who actually had been in the middle of school collaborations from Day One to tell us how their collaboration began, developed, and where it is now. Some of this material is included later on in this section.

We also asked them to play a little game called Gold Card. We asked them to imagine that they had a gold card that identified them instantly to anyone as experts in improving schools through school-community collaboration, and that entitled them to spend a little—not a lot—of pocket money on their efforts. We asked them to imagine that they had been sent to a medium-sized American community where they had never been before and told to try to create the conditions for collaboration. Almost to a person, they understood our purpose. No out-of-town Gold Carder could really bring about a community-school collaboration that wasn't going to happen otherwise. At the same time, playing the game allowed our experts to conceptualize all of the steps that a community-school collaboration would have to take. We have synthesized their responses as follows. The voice in italics in the margins is ours, commenting over their shoulders. As you read, see if you can imagine how you would proceed in your own community.

(One part of the effort here is to identify catalysts—cats—who have the persuasive skills and the commitment and credibility to get people to agree. It's great to have a cat at the policy level, and you certainly do need one or two at the action level as your collaboration moves into gear.)

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First, look for examples of collaboration in the community—maybe between the city and the county, for instance. It might be about cleaning up after a flood, or dealing with a homeless problem, anything that called for agency and people collaboration. Note who the collaborators were—they might be useful in this new collaboration—at least they would know what collaboration looked like. Look around the community for the "hot" educational issue. Maybe it would be teenage pregnancy, maybe dropouts, maybe something else. Also look for "hot" educational areas and people—this school has tried this, or this educator has suggested that. Note anything innovative going on and who suggested it.

Then look at achievement, graduation and college-going rates, try to find out how well the students are doing. Look for schools that seem to be doing well and those that don't. Then pay some visits first to the people whose names you have collected. The idea would be to feel them out for interest in the project. Assemble a small group, a kitchen cabinet, and begin to help them take ownership of this thing in their community. They would know who would have to be involved in the first big meeting, which is the next step to be taken.

(There's always somebody spoiling for a chance to mess up something because he or she didn't think of it first. It is also true that most local people believe nothing is worth doing that they didn't think of. This is the **River City Effect**.*)*

Maybe the most important person would be the superintendent of schools. It would be great if he or she were the kind of person who could see the value to the schools of a community-school collaboration. Use the small, informal group to figure out how to approach the superintendent. Also, look around the community for stake-holders. Who, besides yourself, really has a stake in community-school collaboration. Also find out who in the community would mess up whatever is started if he or she isn't invited to the first meeting and make sure he or she is invited to the first meeting.

Spend a lot of time setting up the first meeting of the full collaborative. This should be an inclusive group. It should have the people who can make decisions for the schools, but it should also include full representation of teachers (including teachers' union), counselors and various support systems. It should have corporate leaders, but also community organization workers, civil rights leaders, law enforcement, church and civic leadership as well. It would be most effective if it has a balance of majority and minority, and male and female members. Don't overlook the contributions that can be made by leaders of organizations that are working with school dropouts. They can provide insight on both the causes of dropping out and ways to meet the needs of high-risk youth. There should be a particularly strong representation of parents—a group

that is a must for school change—and students. If the collaboration leadership is smart, it will put the students in key positions to organize other student leadership around the idea that what's going to happen in the schools is about them. It's important to make sure that no one individual or one agency or entity is "in charge" of the collaboration. You must even be sure not to allow the appearance of that. Unless there are powerful reasons to do so, don't put elected officials on the board, although you must see to it that they are kept informed. It may be advisable especially in smaller towns to invite an official to the first meeting, but don't ask for regular participation. (Consider if you could benefit from a brush-up on the fundamentals of running meetings. A resource to consider is *How to Make Meetings Work* by Michael Doyle and David Straus.)

(Elected officials may be put in the position of having to say "yes" or "no" too soon. To create change you need to be able to get the things done that can be done on a personal basis without going "higher," and then at the next level the things that can be done with a little sensible bending of an insensitive rule, elected officials don't want to know about that. Save them for later.)

SAMPLE AGENDA
FIRST MEETING OF COLLABORATION

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Why This Group Has Been Assembled

III. Status Report on Education and the Economy

IV. Most Pressing (hottest) Local Education Issues (expressed, perhaps, in terms of how far the community must go to pull up to the national education goals for the year 2000)

V. Collaboration: What It Is and How It Could Help Address Local Issues

VI. Brief Overview of Collaborative Efforts in Other Communities: What They Have Accomplished and Over What Time Period

VII. Distribution of *Let's Do It Our Way: Working Together for Educational Excellence* and relevant materials

VIII. Overview of SWOT Process for Moving from Vision to Action

IX. Discussion of Next Steps, Willingness of Group to Proceed

X. Next Meeting Arrangements and Date

XI. Adjournment

Have the collaboration leadership publicize the meeting thoroughly. It would be a good idea to have a newspaper or TV or radio station person on the collaborative board, not as the public relations person but for his or her contribution as a citizen of the community.

(Everybody puts media people on committees to get publicity and the media knows it and hates it. Media people can contribute their own smarts—as you may imagine, the publicity will take care of itself. In one collaboration we know, dropouts are on the radio regularly to urge their former fellow students to stay in school.)

Make as much as you can out of that first meeting. Let everyone feel that it is a historic occasion.

(One collaboration we know of handed out collaboration insignia to every member and had a picture made for everyone.)

(You will know something has to be done when one of the members of your board, after exhibiting unusual patience while others talk for five minutes, says, in effect: Let's do it my way. That is the **Sinatra Factor**. *It means that you need help to build your group's sense of mutual ownership. A good way to do that is with a mission statement, developed by the group in a collaborative process. It serves to prove that they can agree and it provides the reason for collaboration.)*

You may well learn something unsettling in that first meeting or shortly thereafter. That is, that some people on this collaborative board are not very collaborative people. They are, often, used to giving orders and being obeyed. Some like to dominate meetings. It's also possible that a certain amount of finger-pointing and "blaming" will occur. If the noise and heat levels make it hard to perceive harmony and agreement through the smoke, you may consider a team-building experience. Possibly someone (or ones) local but not associated regularly with members of the group could do this team-building, or perhaps you would need to go out of town and spend a few Gold Card dollars on a travelling pro. At the very least, you might smuggle copies of a good collaborative book, like *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* by Roger Fisher and William Ury, into the folders of the chief offenders. It's most important that the collaborative understand there's blame enough to go around—and that its members adopt a cooperative if not necessarily congenial style.

(A collaboration expert we know sent us a curt note to that point. No money should be spent for six months and then not until every member of the board has spent at least one day in school and knows a little about what is going on. On the subject of the staff person, try hard to find a cat here—credibility, commitment, patience and persuasiveness.)

One of the things to do after the first meeting would be to use the Gold Card to purchase a full-time staff person or persons. These big honchos may get very enthusiastic, but you have to remember that they will not have the time (or take the time) to do the real day-to-day work. A staff member is maybe the most important thing for a collaborative—he or she buys you time and you need that badly. It's possible you might get someone good on loan from one of the industries or businesses involved. But don't spend a lot of money on anything other than this staff person, not at first certainly.

(Again Yin and Yang. Set a discrete, doable task, and within that, do a little of everything at once. Think whole. Think one.)

It's important for the collaboration to set real, measurable goals for the long-term and there's a bit of a Catch-22 here. How can we set goals before we know more, but how will we know what we have to learn before we have goals? The trick is to approach it a little at a time, not setting goals at first but not forgetting that they have to be set and the sooner the better.

(Here's the biggie: "A wise person once said: Pick a fight that's big enough to matter and small enough to win, and then win it.")

At the same time, you want to find something you can succeed at visibly. You want something to point to as a success. Again, it's important to keep it simple. Remember the KISS acronym (Keep It Simple, Stupid). Pick one or two schools to work with. Find something concrete you can do that won't take forever and lies within a larger goal, such as improving the graduation rate of the entering senior class within the larger goal of increasing it eventually for the whole high school.

(Remember that school-community collaboration is harder than getting through a family reunion with no bruised feelings. Think in terms of five to seven years if you are looking for anything remotely like real change. But plan for small, visible successes along the way to maintain the enthusiasm and commitment of volunteer collaborators.)

Early on, try to identify a local or state foundation and approach it to put a little money into the collaborative for some specific purpose. Maybe go to a foundation that is funding two efforts for youth—one for parenting education and one for health, say—and get them to offer 25 percent more if the people will do them together in one school.

Still early on, you will have to defend against the purveyors of the "quick fix." You will have some school people who know perfectly well that the process being discussed requires major change and will take a long time, while others may be selling you the idea that if you just gave the schools a dozen more nurses and a phalanx of counselors everything would be dandy. Work hard to see that your core of collaboration people can recognize the "quick fix" when they see it and just say no.

Help the group find the proper time to form into a legal entity, a "sovereign state" of some kind. You need to do that for credibility, for funding purposes, and maybe for self-motivation, too. (It may not be appropriate for a year or more until enough successes are under way; sometimes it should happen sooner.)

(In one collaboration effort we know, the collaborators made sure that the state superintendent of schools was kept abreast and he has recently called to tell them that whenever they are ready they can tell him whether he's helping them or hurting them and if it's the latter, he promises to stop.)

It's a good idea not to forget your state educators in all this. It may be impossible for a state to decree school change—it's not a good idea to get too far from the building level for change anyway—but the state education people can help you or hurt you, so it's wise to keep them informed.

Someone from the outside probably is necessary at some stage of the collaboration. At some point, you will need someone who is free to say: "I think you've gone as far down that road as you can go." Or: "Here is the experience elsewhere in the country." You may also need someone who can ask questions politically difficult for local collaborators to raise. Use the outsider's experience or knowledge to help make that next decision.

(In our appendix, we have a list of individuals and organizations who have had some experience providing the outside presence in a collaborative. You may want to talk with one or more of these before you do anything in your community.)

You'll have to remember that a collaboration board, or whatever you choose to call it, is like any other organization—it goes stale if nobody pays attention to its dynamics. It's a good idea to stage retreats where the work being done is reviewed and board members have a chance in reasonably pleasant circumstances to review goals and refresh their commitment to the collaboration. Also, you will want lively, interesting reports to come regularly to these people. It never hurts, either, to have good stories in the newspapers and on radio and TV about what's going on.

Maybe the most important thing in the long run is to find a way to institutionalize the change that you have created. If you don't get beyond the building level—one or two schools—there is always a real chance that in time the good things being done will be eroded. The kids involved in the change graduate and their parents are interested in other things and it's happened many times that schools have reverted to their old ways. You need to reach at least the district level and it's better if the state is involved as well. That's why the local and state superintendents of schools and the boards of education are so important. You have to win them over at some point in the game to protect your progress. And remember, even the best-intentioned school districts and superintendents have a lot going on in their lives. They may find it hard to keep their eye on the collaboration ball at every minute. So do whatever you can to keep support for the collaboration on the district's agenda.

Then, if you've been fortunate enough to get local or state foundation money, or if you are involved in a national demonstration program, you have to be working almost from the beginning to determine who will pay for whatever you are doing that is being funded from outside when the outside people leave. Foundations like to start things up and then go on to other fields to conquer. That's why it's good in a way not to have too much money being spent on you.

"We're wonderful one times one," e.e. cummings

As our collaborator-friends told us, the Gold Card situation was artificial. Its purpose was to give us a kind of model of how collaboration can work. (See the tips listed on page 12.) As with all models, experience is the best modifier. Not many communities are going to have a modern-day Lone Ranger sporting a Gold Card ride down from the hills onto Main Street. We were just as interested in how the real collaborations worked. How do community-school collaborations get started, we wondered. Are there common elements? If someone knew the common elements, would it help him or her start a collaboration in his or her own community?

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

- Identify one or more **"cats"** who have the skills, commitment and credibility to get people to agree.
- Assemble a small group to begin planning and to help make connections to stake-holders.
- Look for "hot" education issues—how do local achievement, graduation and college-going rates compare to national figures? To national goals?
- Begin working on a set of long-term measurable goals but plan for small visible successes all along the way.
- Identify a funding source to support the collaboration agenda but avoid spending funds on "quick fixes."
- Identify one or more staff persons to carry out the day-to-day work of the collaborative.
- Look for the appropriate time to form into a legal entity—for credibility, funding purposes and self-motivation.
- Carefully plan an inclusive kickoff meeting and arrange for media coverage.
- Use retreats to review goals and refresh the commitment of the collaborators.
- Institutionalize the changes made by the collaborative so that progress will become permanent.
- Keep state educators informed.
- Use outside experts as necessary to ask politically difficult questions.

We chose a handful of collaborations to describe in the following brief snapshots because they seem to add up to a whole (there's that one again). In a number of cases, particularly in the larger cities, we focus here on collaborations of less than city-wide scope. It was in rural McDowell County, NC, that we learned about **synchronicity** from a quiet, self-effacing **cat** named Dean Gouge, who is the dropout coordinator there. He traced it to the works of film motivator Earl Nightingale, who credited it to author Arthur Koestler. The author used it in his book, *Janus*, defining it as "the coming together of seemingly unrelated events and people that bring about situations previously hoped for."

MCDOWELL COUNTY, NC

McDowell is in the foothills of North Carolina, east of Asheville. Early involvement with an extended school program in high school (8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.) keyed to school integration efforts in the '70s got the county started. But while around 700 students who had dropped out of school have earned diplomas or GEDs since the program began, what's more striking is the collaboration bringing about significant change in the schools over the past several years. Renewed interest at the superintendent's level, a strong commitment by school board members, and Gouge's return are some elements of the **synchronicity** here. Gouge came back from the Air Force to teach, ended up as dropout coordinator with state and Appalachian Regional Commission grants, which the county has used to launch a comprehensive, 12-program effort on behalf of at-risk students overseen by a task force involving industry, social services, courts, the schools and the community college. Programs include early childhood mentoring and skill-building, and teams of counselors and administrators sharing with teachers the responsibility for reaching and assisting high-risk students. McDowell's retention rate of students through 12th grade has gone from 66 percent two years ago to 79 percent last year and is expected to go over 80 percent this year.

*(McDowell is a small system with the typical rural problems—distance between services and people needing them, and the like. But smaller school districts have a great opportunity in collaboration by virtue of not having smothering levels of bureaucracy to work through. Besides Gouge, who functions at the staff level, others, including School Superintendent David Ricketts, Dr. Robert Boggs, president of McDowell Technical Community College, and Rod Birdsong, executive director of the McDowell County Chamber of Commerce, are **cats** at the policy level. Still left to do is more comprehensive involvement of teachers in the collaborative experience.)*

SAN DIEGO, CA

San Diego's school system is as big and urban as McDowell's is small and rural. Yet in many ways, the San Diego collaboration has elements of the comprehensive approach. In 1986 Superintendent of Schools Thomas Payzant established a Schools of the Future Commission whose report resulted in a number of new community-school coalitions and a major school restructuring effort aimed at providing individual schools with greater autonomy. In the spring of 1988, 28 people, including the chief administrative officers of all four major services—city, county, schools and community college district—met to form a collaborative called New Beginnings. It focused considerable attention on one school in which an experiment in agency-school collaboration had been begun and which inspired the introduction of collaborative efforts at 12 schools in the system that were in trouble. New Beginnings has sponsored a remarkable parent education effort and an equally remarkable four-school effort to assist young African-American male youths, among other efforts. Also, it has recently joined the middle grades initiative project supported by the Clark Foundation.

*(Of the collaborative efforts we saw, the San Diego effort is one of the most broadly based and has achieved great penetration into the schools. This is because one major **cat** is Payzant, the school superintendent, and another is Jake Jacobsen, director of the city's department of social services. Two strong policy **cats** and good skills of this sort at the staff level make a forceful combination. Payzant says it all looks good but is meaningless "unless the process actually affects what happens in teaching and learning—and it's too early to tell about that.")*

PORTLAND, OR

Portland's collaboration began in 1983 with talks between staff members of the city, school system and Chamber of Commerce. Portland's dropout rate and unemployment, particularly among minority youth, were alarming. Marcia Douglas, a staff member for the city, remembers that an early pilot project bringing business into the high schools to teach resume writing disclosed that few of the students could write well enough to survive professionally in the world outside. The staff members got their bosses to meet—the mayor and city council, the superintendent of schools and a chamber official. The upshot was the formation of an ad hoc group in which each of the leaders agreed to bring two or three others in to serve. The Portland Round Table was the result, a collaboration involving 21 leaders from business, local government and the schools, working within a 10-year plan. Portland is attempting to work remedially with its unemployed youth at the same time it goes forth with a preventative plan in the schools. Instead of focusing on the deficits of their youth population, Portland analyzed youth's needs in terms of the barriers that were preventing them from succeeding. After having laid out the barriers according to when they started to influence children's lives (birth to age 21), the Round Table created a matching matrix of strategies for removing the barriers. Support around the community from the Private Industry Council, the Urban League, the county commission

(The Portland Round Table is struggling now with the issue of what to do for the target population youth with shrinking resources. Choices will have to be made and compromises resolved. Instead of initiating additional programs and services for selected students, under consideration are ways to make systemic changes that will have an impact on all of the targeted children and youth.)

and other sources is solid. In 1988-89 Portland served 3,233 kids, 277 (nine percent) out of school, spending $4.6 million, slightly more than half of it from the Job Training Partnership Act budget and the rest from the school district, city general fund, community development and housing budgets and business contributions. Dropout rates have been reduced but it is clear that only a small percentage of the target population of 38,000 low-income youth has been reached.

CINCINNATI, OH

(Pepper and other business folk in Cincinnati recommend going to schools to learn first-hand what schools today and students today are like. Pepper's associate R.L. Wehling says, "Read Lisbeth Schorr's book, Within Our Reach. *It should be required reading because it will convince you that the solutions to our problems are at hand.")*

John Pepper, CEO of Proctor and Gamble, returned to Cincinnati from a National Association of Business conference in Washington wondering if what he had heard there about the national dropout problem was true in Cincinnati. He soon caught the attention and interest of Superintendent Lee Etta Powell and City Councilman Ken Blackwell, who joined Pepper in creating Cincinnati's Youth Collaborative in 1987. Pepper got the job of being liaison between the collaborative movement and the business community and he plunged into his work with zeal. He spearheaded a fundraising effort with business, working through the "old boy network" and educating the business group on the disaster that faced the nation if something is not done about our educational process. In the end, $7.5 million was raised, 80 percent of it from the business sector. Among other things, these funds have supported a three-year pilot project targeted at two middle schools where team teaching and computer-assisted learning is accelerating the progress of all students and at two preschool programs for three- and four- year-olds. With its paid staff of five, the collaborative has been able to oversee a massive mentoring program that involves 1,500 volunteers, establish a college information center in a downtown department store, and match adopting businesses to every school in Cincinnati.

KENTUCKY'S FORWARD IN THE FIFTH

(Forward in the Fifth Chair JoAnne James says a key to their success was that the collaborative took the stance from day one "that we would not criticize superintendents or any of the school people. The approach was so different from what others had done before us that we became trusted helpers when others were perceived as enemies.")

In 1986 Kentucky's Fifth Congressional District had the dubious distinction of ranking lowest of any in the nation in educational attainment. The late businessman Earl D. Wallace, lifetime resident in the district, decided to do something about it. He raised funds for two studies on the area's educational and economic development outlook and for a conference retreat, involving 80 district leaders, to discuss the findings. Six months, later a private nonprofit umbrella organization called Forward in the Fifth was formed. Concerned citizens, including parents, business people and educators—but no elected officials—serve on the board, and similarly constituted affiliate boards operate in each of the 27 counties in the district. Grants from the Appalachian Regional Commission and the Ford Foundation enabled the collaborative to set up a mini-grants program requiring matching funds from local communities. The umbrella organization brokers ideas and sets direction for the affiliates in part by setting criteria for the mini-grants. For the last three years, for example, grants have been made for school attendance improvement projects. In the first year, the district raised attendance by one percent which translated to a gain of over $1 million in federal aid. IBM has assisted by donating 40 Writing to Read computer labs to district schools. The district organization has given communities membership in a bigger movement that has had an almost magical effect on local accomplishments.

COLUMBIA, SC

Columbia was one of 21 sites in the mid-'80s to receive a Ford Foundation planning grant to create a collaborative that would bring together the entire community to address issues facing at-risk youth. The city's unique grassroots approach coupled with a plan to operate out of the Chamber of Commerce won the community an $80,000, 20-month grant which was supplemented by over one-quarter million dollars worth of local donations and contributions. Numerous committees of parents, business and school people meeting weekly at first gave rise to a variety of parenting programs, early childhood activities, and middle school team-teaching projects. Religious and civic organizations have been mobilized to run after-school tutoring and parent education projects. Businesses participate in weekly team-mentoring sessions at the schools. Student recognition programs and Youth Speakouts—opportunities for young people to talk about problems they face and about ways to overcome those problems—and a variety of other activities have pulled all segments of the community into the discussion and problem resolution process.

(Despite its many successes, the Columbia Collaborative is no longer staffed. Says former director Norma Higgins, "We made a fundamental mistake. We went after the big money offered up-front, but we didn't put enough time into developing the financial support necessary to keep us going after the seed money was gone.")

What do all these efforts have in common then? Do they reflect the elements of collaboration that we established at the beginning of this chapter? Let's review the elements of collaboration.

Our friends at the National Association of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Agencies listed the four things that every strong collaboration must have in place to succeed.

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- **A strongly felt need that young people deserve something better.**

There needs to be a sense—shared by everyone around the table—that our young people deserve something better—better teaching, better counseling, better opportunities to make something of their lives. Some collaborations begin with needs elegantly stated and well-researched in impressive reports; others may spring from the gut-level sense of average citizens that something is just plain wrong. However they're expressed, a clear statement of need can be a catalyst for change, a rallying point that gets stake-holders united to make things better for kids. A wise man once said, "If you can state the problem, you can solve the problem." Every successful collaboration effort takes this advice to heart. Define the problem that needs to be addressed in simple and clear terms and you've taken an important step in making things better for kids.

- **A vision of how collaborators can collectively respond.**

If the statement of need describes the here and now, the conditions we want to change, the vision describes how the future will look once everything we want is in place. It's a vivid picture of how the world will be different once we succeed. Like a problem statement, a vision is a motivator. And the more vivid and real it is, the more it motivates. Warren Bennis, a popular writer on the subject of leadership, quotes Walt Disney as saying, "If you can dream it, you can do it." That's the essence, the power of a vision. It pulls people forward toward a shared goal. When the collaborative's vision for children is powerful and clear, people will actually see and feel how the lives of kids will be different if their plans succeed; they will have that shared sense of mission that distinguishes successful projects. Without a vision, the people perish. So do collaborations. Think of your vision as your Gold Card—the magic tool that unlocks and inspires dreams. And don't leave home without it.

❖ **A decision-making process that is clear and credible.**

Collaborating isn't easy, and, for a lot of us, it isn't natural. When the going gets tough, giving in to the **Sinatra Factor** can be a real temptation. Real collaboration requires shared leadership, and that means making sure every party in the collaboration is comfortable with the work they are to do and the role they have to play. As you structure your collaboration, you will want to pay a lot of attention to group process—the way the collaborative makes decisions and conducts its business. Every collaborative is really a forum for conversations among likely and unlikely partners. So to make sure everyone at the table can be heard and understood, those in leadership roles should invite participation and encourage the free flow of ideas—not filter, edit and control people's input, as so many traditional leaders tend to do. Remember, chances are that you've come together in a collaboration because you've been smart enough to figure out that no single person or institution has all the answers or all the resources needed to solve the problem. So, listen carefully, defer judgment and seek out the highest common denominator between you and collaborating cousins. It works wonders.

❖ **A commitment to provide and seek resources.**

The key word here is commitment. Ideas can move mountains, but real change doesn't occur until people step up to the plate and pledge their time, talent and treasure to make something happen. Most people—or foundations or companies, for that matter—will give generously if they believe in the power of an idea and are convinced that the program addresses a cause they feel strongly about. So to build the commitment of others, the leaders of the collaboration need first to have that inspiring vision we've talked about. And then, to attract resources, the collaboration needs to convince others that they, too, have a stake in seeing the program work. What's in it for me and for the people I care about? Help the people whose support you want answer that question, and you've got them—and the resources they have—on your side.

MDC has devised a simple process for keeping all the elements we've discussed in sync, drawing from the wide array of strategic planning literature. We call it the process of "Moving from Vision to Action," and basically, it's what all good change efforts do in order to turn needs into visions, visions into goals, goals into strategies, and strategies into action steps that everyone can follow to get the work done.

We've laid out the process as a series of questions that you will want to ask yourselves as you proceed. The sequence of the steps is important; lots of well-intentioned efforts have fallen short of the mark by rushing to develop action plans before their vision is clear and their needs defined. So we encourage you to follow the steps as they appear so that you touch all the right bases. (See Appendix A for references on additional community change models.)

STEP ONE: DEFINING YOUR VISION

We start with the vision stage because developing a vision is a great way to develop group spirit and commitment, and spirit and commitment are the fuel for every successful collaboration.

Your vision of the future begins with a look at the past and the present. Gather a group together and ask yourselves these questions:

- What about the current situation? Do we want to change or get rid of it?
- What do we want to keep and make better?

Once you've decided what needs to be different, the fun really begins. You can start to envision the future you would like:

- Let's look forward 10 years from today. What do we hope for—for our kids, for our schools—in our wildest dreams? (Remember Walt Disney: "If you can dream it, you can do it.") What's the best situation we can imagine for children and for schools a decade from now?
- What would a typical elementary school/middle school/high school be like if we worked together, collaboratively, to make all this come true? How would our children be acting? Learning? (Remember, a good vision should be so clear, so real, so compelling that you can see, feel, touch and taste it; so keep refining your dream until you have a vivid picture—in living color—that you can really get yourself, and others, excited about.)

Once you've developed the vision, put it down on paper to share with the world. If you're good with words, write a vision statement or a poem, or a theme song. If you're good with pictures, make a collage or a drawing that shows how your school and your community will be different. Communicate the excitement that you feel about the way things could be.

Remember, too, to hold onto the statement or the picture you make. It's always a good idea to refer to your original vision from time to time, for inspiration, when things don't seem to be going the way they should, or for celebration, to show you just how far you've come toward making the vision a reality.

STEP TWO: SWOT ANALYSIS

Once the vision is in place, the time comes to dig into the problems a bit more. Your vision describes a future destination—where you want your community's schools to be, say, 10 years from now. But before you plan how to reach your vision, you'll need to get a clear fix on where you're starting from. That's where the **SWOT** analysis comes in.

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats—the forces that will either help or hinder you in pursuit of your vision. A **SWOT** analysis is a quick and dirty way of answering some important questions basic to every good planning effort.

- What do we have going for us and what do we have going against us as we try to make this dream for the future come true? What challenges are likely to be thrown in our path and how well will we be able to respond?

In your **SWOT** analysis, you're going to answer these questions from two perspectives—first, by taking a look at the challenges posed by the world around you, and second, by looking at your community (or school or collaboration group) to measure your own skills and shortcomings.

First, the outside look. Here you'll want to ask yourselves:

- What are the major social, political, economic and community trends that are working in favor of children and schools (the Opportunities that your collaboration can take advantage of to reach its vision).

An example of an external Opportunity may be the fact that the state legislature is gathering momentum to pass legislation related to school reform.

- What trends are making things worse for kids and schools (the Threats that stand in the way of progress)?

An example of an external Threat may be that the number of single-parent families continues to increase, and trends point to those families continuing to be more likely to earn a living below the poverty level.

Once you've listed the Opportunities and Threats, you'll have a good picture of the external challenges facing the collaborative in its work to make schools and the community better for kids.

Next it's time to see how well equipped you are to address the Threats and seize the Opportunities that the world is handing you. You'll next want to ask yourselves:

- What Strengths (knowledge, resources, ongoing programs, contacts, talents, skills) exist in our community or city (e.g., in our schools, in our social service agencies, within other community institutions, within our own collaborative effort)?

This list is probably long, but you should take the time to inventory your strengths so that you are clear about the existing resources and so that you take the time to think through who may be potential partners or allies.

- What Weaknesses, liabilities, or shortcomings do we have in our community and in our own collaborative effort?

- Given these strengths and weaknesses, how well equipped are we to deal with the Opportunities and Threats facing youth and schools in our community?

This step is the reality test for your vision. It tells you where you have your work cut out for you—what you have to draw on and guard against to give your vision life. Just as with the vision you've created, it's a good idea to write out your **SWOT** analysis or develop a chart that depicts your Strengths and Weaknesses and the Opportunities and Threats your effort faces. This will help you set realistic goals and strategies for your collaboration.

STEP THREE: SETTING GOALS

Now that you've defined where you want to go (the Vision), what you're up against (Opportunities and Threats), and how well equipped you are for the journey (your community and your groups' Strengths and Weaknesses), you'll want to turn to setting concrete goals for your collaborative.

If a vision is the picture of the future you want, think of goals as the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle which, taken together, will produce that picture. Like the pieces of a puzzle, your goals should reinforce each other. Each should be chosen so that it contributes to getting the whole job done.

At the goal-setting phase of your work you'll want to ask yourselves:

- What concrete outcomes do we want for this collaboration? What, specifically, do we want to happen for our children and their schools?

When you've generated a list of possible goals, you'll want to measure each against your:

- Vision (Is this goal really going to help us get there?)
- SWOT analysis (Have we taken into account the limits of our own abilities? The size of the challenge? Are we being realistic? Or are we selling ourselves short?)
- Own assessment of the importance of the goal. (Is it big enough to fight and small enough to win?)

Winnow down your list to a handful of winnable propositions (things that you believe you can really make happen) and you're ready to start strategy development.

STEP FOUR: DEVELOPING STRATEGIES

Now that your goals are clearly defined, the big question looms—"How will we get there?" Strategies are like the road maps we follow to any destination. They define the routes you will take to reach the goals you've set.

Developing strategies involves three levels of work. If you've ever been involved in any problem-solving process, these steps will be familiar to you:

- Research your options:

  What have other schools and communities done that have tried to do what we're doing?

  What's worked and hasn't—and why?

- Analyze your options:

  What will it take in time, money and organizational effort to bring this plan off?

Can we do it?

What other individuals or agencies might have a stake in the issue and be willing to help us?

How can we bring them into the collaboration?

- Decide what to do:

Which of our options makes the most sense (financially, politically and the like)?

Which are we most excited about?

STEP FIVE: ACTION PLANNING

Now that the goals are clear and the strategies well-defined comes a very important step—deciding who will do what, when.

Earlier we said that working in collaboration is hard work. One of the things that makes it easier is if everyone involved understands what they're expected to do to make the whole thing work—that goes for organizations as well as people.

A simple device for keeping people clear about their tasks is to observe the "3W" rule. Never make a decision without determining who will do what, when. That way, all the wonderful energy you bring to the issues you care about will be focused productively in the same direction and you will have collaboration, not collision.

So there you have a simple tool for structuring a collaboration that will be need-driven, vision-inspired, clearly organized and full of committed people who know what they are supposed to be doing to make the whole thing work.

GETTING STARTED

So, now, where can you personally get started on all this? How can you find a role for yourself in something that sounds so grand and—by the way, hard to succeed at.

As this chapter indicates, who you are makes a lot of difference as to the view you have of the problem. So we have sections specifically for School People, Parents and Families, Business Folk, Significant Others and Students. (Students are listed last because we want you to hear their voices last—they are what this is all about.) But for the moment, let's suppose you are on the outside of the schoolhouse looking in. You are in something like the position our Gold Card experts were in when they first showed up in town, except that you may have one liability and definitely do have one asset the people who played our little game did not have.

You don't have a Gold Card. You don't have something you can show people that will at once identify you as someone who is an expert and who is entitled to draw a certain amount of currency on a draft. Only you can answer the question of whether you have this much clout, or that much, or none to speak of at all, in your community. You have to begin from where you are.

Your asset is that this is your community. You may already know who the so-called movers and shakers of the community are. You won't have to sit in the library reading newspapers. What you don't know you may be able to learn from friends who would know. In an important way, you are already far ahead of where our Gold Card-carrying experts were at the same stage of the effort.

But you will be doing the same thing the Gold Carders had to do—you will

(1) look for the hot issue around which a community-school collaboration could coalesce,

(2) identify the crucial actors in your community and assess—with the help of your friends—how much commitment you can expect from them,

(3) try to identify potential **cats**, both at the policy and action levels,

(4) make some judgments about **synchronicity**, and

(5) start looking around for a little glue money.

For some specific suggestions about how to proceed, consult the proper heading in this chapter—if you are a family member and a business folk, you may want to look under both of those headings. You may also want to look hard at the schoolpersons section because one of the first things you will want to do is to identify school people who are ready to move for change or are already moving. But for now, two questions come up that you will want to think about—how do you identify **cats** and can you create your own **synchronicity**?

It's not a bad idea to begin at the beginning by asking if you might possibly be a **cat** without ever having thought of yourself that way before. If you are (1) highly committed, (2) skilled in interpersonal relationships, (3) patient and good at creating consensus, and (4) a self-starter and hard worker, you may qualify. Next, do you have the time and the inclination? If you don't qualify for one reason or another here, you have at least identified the kind of person you are looking for. Remember, too, that you need people other than the **cat** type. You need the traditionalists who deal well with detail and follow-through. You need the troubleshooter types. And, of course, you need the true and forever leader, even though you may have to help this individual realize what real servant leadership is and why it is the best, and really only, collaborative kind.

It's important, also, to look for another character in our script, the so-called charismatic. This is an evangelical type, gifted with extraordinary powers of persuasion and a mission. This kind of person can be very helpful but do not, under any circumstances, mistake this person for a cat. Most charismatics demand total loyalty to their vision and are not good collaborators. Their products sometimes demand their personal presence and don't work well when exported. Sometimes you have the feeling that the charismatic likes it that way

How about **synchronicity** then? Can you acquire it? You can't force it. that's for sure. **Synchronicity** is something that happens. You may be able to encourage it. Let's say, for instance, that a big school board election is coming up and an old superintendent of schools is getting ready to retire. If there are progressive candidates for the board—people who know that the schools could be and should be better and who are willing to work in that direction—the best thing you can do for a future collaboration is to work for their election. If they win and the board takes on a new face and, a year or so later, elects a school superintendent who is ready to sponsor change, you may have helped create the conditions for **synchronicity**. And, by the way, there will be plenty of work for all during the election year—go back up to the beginning of the Gold Card exercise and you will see what's most important.

Certainly you can learn to look for and recognize the elements of **synchronicity**. You can monitor the events in your community—the elections, appointments of department heads, actions of teachers' unions—and, with your friends, make some decisions about the timing of your move. Just before an election is generally not a good time, unless it is early enough before the election to be able to affect its outcome. Is it possible to work with one school because the principal is ready and willing and nobody else in the school system much cares? And is it possible that this local foundation would put money into a single school if that school worked with teenage parents and their babies inside the building? And do you have a friend who knows exactly the right person to run that program? You may have some **synchronicity** here waiting to be tapped.

Cooperation, coordination—these are words that lie below the level of collaboration, but they are perfectly good, clean words. If it's possible for you to get something started between the parents and the teachers in one school, or a dialogue between business people and school people that isn't in school at all, for heaven's sake, do it. You may be sowing the seeds of collaboration. This may be the fight for you that is big enough to matter and small enough to win. If you can win it, you may be ready to go on to bigger things. You may be ready for real collaboration, using the leadership you have developed here.

Far and away the most important thing to remember about real collaboration is that it must have singleness of purpose, a perceived goal agreed upon by all. Collaboration is, by its nature, a process of seeking unification. Agreement. Oneness. That requires all of the collaborators to put the cause above their own personal agendas. It's not let's do it my way, but let's do it our way.

If you can foster that spirit and live within its rules, you can learn how to collaborate and get things done. You will also learn the wisdom of the poet e.e. cummings, who knew that no matter how many times you multiply one times one, you still have that surviving, unified, collective digit. One. Wonderful one, signifying multiplicity and unity.

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT

When the superintendent of schools wants to create change, he or she has what Teddy Roosevelt once called a bully pulpit, which is to say, a great position to be persuasive from. We asked several school superintendents who had something going in their districts what they would do to foster collaboration between their schools and communities. Here is a bite-sized synthesis of their responses.

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- Start working with the board of education and the community to create a vision of what the group wants education to accomplish.
- Develop a planning process that takes you from vision to a goals-oriented action plan involving the board, administrators, teachers and staff, parents and the community.
- Educate the parents and teachers on how kids learn and take that education into the schools.

How kids learn. What does this mean? Listen to Thomas Payzant, superintendent of schools, San Diego, CA—"We have to challenge the fundamental assumptions of age, grade, grouping students, time on what is to be learned—the fifty-five minutes of didactic instruction we now have in most schools. What is magical about a single teacher with thirty kids day-in, day-out, and a process that does not teach sharing? Sharing will be one of the most important processes the kids will have to learn and appreciate when they get out."

"What is magical about a single teacher with thirty kids day-in, day-out, and a process that does not teach sharing?"

Larry Rowedder, superintendent of schools, Cumberland County (Fayetteville), NC—"The way to improve student performance is to improve teacher training. We spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on physical plant things in school and pennies on staff development." Rowedder's staff development budget proposal reflects this conviction and commitment.

The superintendent of schools can be the (1) link to the state educational system and legislature, (2) link with the community through the school board, (3) organizer and planner for change, and (4) cheerleader and motivator for the school system.

One ready-to-go superintendent of schools and one together principal will produce, usually, at least one good school.

PRINCIPAL

The principal of a school can be a face passing through on the way to the office or a somebody really about education. If you think you are more of the latter than the former, or could be, you can transform your school. On page 24, hear how one principal took a 94 percent minority school with a high absentee rate, a low achievement rate, a disproportionate number of students with disabilities, and a lot of vandalism and turned it around in under two years. Some clues to success: An increase from the 27th to the 35th percentile in fifth-grade scores—when results were announced, Principal Lisa Carter walked around the halls of the Pauline Jones Elementary School in Fayetteville, NC, with a sign that read: "Shoot for 99"—a reference to the 99th, or highest, percentile. "We teach achievement here," she said.

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

✎ Take a good look at what this elementary school principal did and ask yourself how much of it applies to your school, what needs to be done there, and how you would get started.

"I ask them to come in. I open the door, I tell them we need to hear what they say, and I thank them for saying it afterwards."

I knew I had my hands full when I first came to this school to be principal, a white and a woman at that. I decided to have "focus groups" for parents and called a meeting. One parent showed up. The custodian felt so sorry for me he asked if he could sit in on the meeting. But that one parent was willing to help me. By the time we had the third parent meeting, I had a counselor doing self-esteem work with the kids and the parents were asked to bring their kids to the meeting. It worked the opposite way naturally, with the kids bringing the parents. About 30 of them. They met separately and I asked the parents to tell us what they wanted to talk about and they made a curriculum agenda for the year ("How do I talk to my child about AIDS?" was one subject.).

I knew I had to get my teachers excited. I took the six best to Dodge Park Elementary School in Landsdowne, MD, which is a kindergarten through fourth-grade school with a great reputation. That turned them on and they came back talking change to the other teachers. We formed a teaching effectiveness team after that. They all had to sign one of two contracts. One said, "We, the undersigned, want to be part of an improving school" or one that said "declining school," my point being there is no in-between. They thought I was a nut, but they all signed up for "improving" and I said, see, all we said is "improving," and surely we can do that.

The kids were another thing. I couldn't get them to look me in the eye at first. I started something. I had this grab bag of candies and gifts in my office. I would get on the intercom every day in the afternoon and talk about one kid to the whole school. "I've observed this one child in the fourth grade more than once picking up trash from the hall . . . (pause) . . . She's in Mrs. Soandso's class"—about that time you could hear everyone get real silent—"and her name is ——"and then when I said her name you could hear the whole class applaud. She would get to come to my office and dig something out of my grab bag. And you'd better believe that the next time I saw that kid, she'd look around in a hurry to see if there was any trash to pick up. I asked the teachers to make at least two positive contacts like this a week.

I believe the principal sets the tone for a school. I think principals ought to have a sign on their desks saying, "When the principal is not happy, nobody is happy."

I had the opportunity to hire two more teachers on a remedial program line item in the budget. You might think that as an old remedial teacher I'd jump to hire two of those, but I thought it was better to hire two more teachers and lower the teacher-pupil rate. So I did and the teachers were thrilled. Darned if they didn't just go right on teaching at the middle of that class and the bright kids were bored and the ones on the bottom were hugging the bottom for dear life. I asked the teachers if they really wanted to keep on with ability grouping or try for once to reach all the kids. Of course, that's hard. It means conceptualizing differently for different kids. But it can be done. Sally might be in the library comparing Columbus to Magellan and Susy might be one of the kids building a replica of the Nina, but they both would learn something about Columbus.

This school really is open to the community. I have brought in black lawyers and judges, they walk around and talk to the kids, great role models for them. We have a policeman we've adopted, I took a kid home to the project one day and when I got back to my car there must have been eight drug dealers around it hassling me, and they left only when another car showed up. I was furious. I drove back to the school and called the public relations person for the police and we got into an argument, and he was saying the police wouldn't go into that project because they are spat upon and reviled and hated. And I said,"Come into my school, you'll be safe there." He came and I said, "You ought to come more often." Since then, the police have come into the school once, twice a month, fingerprinting the kids (the kids love that), demonstrating in the school how the police dogs work, or out in the park with their trained horses. A reporter for the paper asked me once how I got so much activity in the school. I told him, "I ask them to come in, I open the door, I tell them we need to hear what they have to say, and I thank them for saying it afterwards."

TEACHER

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- Look around your classes and try to name and count in your mind all those who are not getting what you are teaching. Now ask yourself if there is anything you can do for these kids—ask yourself if you have any Stephanies (see story below) and, if so, how you might reach them.

"How did Stephanie get so smart?"

At Parkway South High School in Manchester, MO (a suburb of St. Louis), Stephanie had been a buzzard in her reading section since way back in the second grade. In the pecking order of the reading section, the bluebirds were at the top and you worked down until you got to the buzzards.

But Parkway South had ambitions. Some members of the school family wanted to become associated with educator Ted Sizer's Coalition of Essential Schools. As with all ideas of this nature, this one was taken up by the School Improvement Committee—a group composed of representatives from the administration, the faculty, parents and students. The decision to join was reached through a formal vote of the faculty.

The school elected to adopt three of the Sizer common principles to concentrate on. First, students would be treated as workers and teachers as coaches. The idea here is to organize students as workers, sometimes in groups, and assign learning tasks which the teacher supervises or coaches. Secondly, as an outgrowth of team teaching, the process of learning is much more personalized. Finally, instead of merely covering content, students are to demonstrate mastery in a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge. (Students are given more than just one chance to demonstrate mastery—if their first try at a paper or speech is only a C effort, teachers coach students on how to do better and any revised and improved product is given full credit.) Teaching teams were assigned to 100 10th graders and course work was planned in four-hour blocks, not bound by traditional class periods. The system was modified and later extended to the ninth grade. Under the new system, it was possible to take a group of 15 of the most at-risk kids and give them a jump on the others in the block time scheme.

Stephanie was one of these. She was one of the inner-city kids bussed in to desegregate Parkway South's 80 percent students from well-off suburban families. Andie Brown, Stephanie's English teacher, said that these skill-deficient kids were coming into Parkway South and immediately being re-segregated by ability grouping and the tracking system. Andie and her fellow teachers came up with the idea of giving these kids an in-school head start by working with them in groups of 15 first thing in the morning on materials to be covered in class later on. That meant that by the time they came to regular class, which might be in the fifth period, they were essentially being re-taught. And the beautiful thing about it was that everybody functioned in the regular class this way. The tutorial kids were raising their hands in the regular class and all those little discipline problems that were happening before because kids didn't feel good about their ability to perform in class were suddenly gone. These kids were now respected by their classmates and they weren't thought of as those dumb students anymore.

In a school in which many of the ninth- and 10th-grade at-risk youths were functioning at sixth- and seventh-grade skill levels, and some were actually reading at a fourth-grade level, Parkway South is getting a three- to four-grade learning gain in a year's time in some cases. Even with the loss that occurs over summer, the average at-risk youth is gaining two grade levels with every year's work. "Nothing succeeds like success," says Ms. Brown, "and it's almost like magic. Suddenly, I had kids ask me how does Stephanie know all the answers. So I told them that I invited her to my tutorial. And then they said, 'Well, how do we get in?' Suddenly we have kids asking how do we get in this class that's going to make us better readers and writers . . . It's pretty exciting."

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- Ask yourself how many parents of kids in your classes you've talked with lately. Could you do better? Could you find ways to get the parents to help you with the problems you have with their kids in school? Make a plan.

"We tell them to bring the kids and we'll feed everyone."

Teacher Nancy Lail's kids are preschoolers, from all around the mountain foothills community of McDowell County, NC, many from disadvantaged family backgrounds, but many more not. The program called McSmiles has no criteria for entrance beyond being a preschooler. It operates out of an old school bus, refurbished as a spic-and-span classroom on wheels, right down to the last ruler and penholder, desk and chair. Off it goes in the mornings, picking up kids as close to their homes as possible—135 kids this year at nine locations (80 are already enrolled for the following year and another bus will be commissioned). Ms. Lail says that the key to their success is the parents. "We have parents from every background you can imagine. The ones with money furnish the food, some even bought us the portable potty. They plan Thanksgiving and Christmas picnics. We sent out 6,500 handwritten and printed notes to parents so they know about us. How do we get the parents to participate? We tell them to bring the kids and we'll feed everyone," she says. What Ms. Lail is doing in this rural southern community parallels James Comer's work in the inner-city schools of New Haven. By bringing parents into the schools, these communities are bridging the social and cultural gaps between home life and school life.

COUNSELOR

Gloria Salcito is a counselor, officially a dropout coordinator, at Lincoln High School in Los Angeles, which has a school population that is 75 percent Hispanic and 25 percent Asian. Ms. Salcito works with the high-risk kids. She is a great believer in options. She will not put a kid back in class with a teacher with whom she/he has failed. There are other options. If a

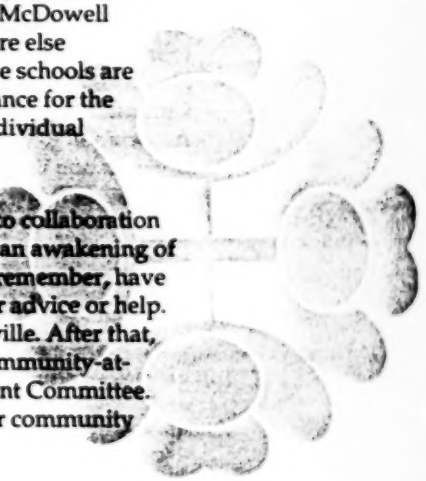
kid comes to her with a complaint—as most do at one time or another—she listens patiently for as long as it takes to hear it out. Then she pushes a pad in front of the kid. "Write it down," she says. After getting through a period of bewilderment, the kid writes down the complaint in as much detail as he/she can muster. Together, they look at the complaint. They look for options, what they can do about it, all the way from an OT (Opportunity to Transfer) to something milder—"kids hate the idea of transferring away from their friends so they don't often take that option." She is skilled in getting the better-off students to tutor the ones who are behind, using successful seniors to help not-so-successful students, using dropouts who have seen the light and are making something of themselves to persuade younger students to stay in school. But she may be best of all with parents. She has a roster of all the parents in the school. She attaches information about their kids to their names. Every day she takes enough time to call a handful of parents. She will begin by identifying herself and saying: "I have to tell you something about your son/daughter . . . ." There is always a moment of dead phone time during which she can literally hear the parent holding his or her breath. "Your Johnny is doing so well in music in the school this year, I know you must be proud of him. It's made a better student out of him, did you know that?"

"I have to tell you something about your kid . . . ."

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

✎ If you know enough about the kids in school who see you, you might be able to make up a list like Gloria's. Why not try to do it tomorrow and see if you can find the time—somehow—to call one parent. Then call another. Then invite them, together with a few teachers and, perhaps even the principal, to use the Vision to Action process.

We chose these examples of school people not because they were the only ones we could find (we found plenty) or because they were necessarily the best, but because they illustrated a range of possibility. In San Diego and McDowell County, NC, the collaborations are community-wide. Everywhere else mentioned, the first key collaborative link has been forged: These schools are working with the families of their students to improve performance for the whole school. The given here is that the only way to improve individual students' performance significantly is to improve the schooling.



For school people who wish to see real improvement, the route to collaboration may well begin with the parents. The first step here seems to be an awakening of interest by the parents through the school's initiative—parents, remember, have not been trained in the past to believe that the school wants their advice or help. Next an organizational framework can be formed, as in Fayetteville. After that, parental groups can be broadened to include members of the community-at-large, after the fashion of the Parkway South School Improvement Committee. The next step beyond that may well be creation of the agency for community collaboration we discussed in the first part of this guide.

But no two situations are quite the same. School people about the task of improving (as Ms. Carter says, "Surely, we can improve") may find kindred spirits in the community already moving in their direction. Then the question becomes one of how best to take advantage of a spot of **synchronicity**. You will find the answer for yourselves, perhaps, with a little help from your friends.

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- Sit down and think about what you'd like to see changed in your kid's school and then write down the name of the one person in that school that you believe will listen to you. Figure out how to have a meeting with that person.

"Parents just don't understand that they have the power . . . ."

What can parents do? Let's begin with the worst possible scenario, a school system or single school that is visibly stagnant or worse. The school is Trouble with a capital T, but nobody is doing anything about it. Lorraine Monroe, an educator who was made principal of such a school in the South Bronx, makes an excellent point: "Parents just don't understand that they have the power. Give me five angry parents in a principal's office and I will show you a school that is about to experience some change."

We tried that theory out on school principals wherever we went on our travels and to a person, they agreed that Ms. Monroe is right. "I would hope it doesn't have to come to that," one said, "but, yes, if such a group showed up in my office I would surely listen—not to listen is an open invitation for them to show up at the next school board meeting. That's all right, but you'd like to be on their side rather than the one they are mad at."

Just so. Parents are the voice of the taxpayer coming through a bullhorn. Parents not only pay taxes, they send their children—their most prized possessions—to the schools. If the schools are failing, their children are the victims. The voice of the parent carries an authority on this account that no other citizens of the community can match. If each of those five angry parents Ms. Monroe mentions can get just two others stirred up sufficiently, the principal's office won't hold the group of 15 that can be formed from that modest beginning.

But, of course, the principal we quoted is right: It shouldn't come to that. By far the best thing parents can do is connect with what is going on inside the schools to make education better for all of their children. It may be that a committee already exists on the order of Parkway South High School's School Improvement Committee (see School People). Or at least there may be a Parent-Teacher Association to work through. It's also possible that you may find a parent organization like the one operating in San Diego in a heavily Hispanic neighborhood.

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- Make a friend of your child's teacher, make a vow to visit the school, show your child you really care how she/he progresses in school.

"It's the parents' belief that finally gets to the teachers."

Vahac Mardirosian has developed a course to teach parents how to become involved in their children's education. With small grants, he has managed to train 3,600 parents in some 30 schools in San Diego. He stresses that he will not go into a school where the educational leadership does not want him and that he teaches "collaboration" between parents and teachers. "I want them to go about this as friendly as they can, because in the end I want them—the parents and teachers—to be collaborators."

"Hispanic parents," says Mardirosian, who grew up in Mexico, "tend to believe that what the school does with their children is the school's business." His first task is to help them feel a sense of involvement in and responsibility for their children's education. Mardirosian thinks that the biggest problem is changing

the mindset of the schools and community at large that parents "don't care" about their children. The teacher may think that the child is "unteachable"—after all, the child is not learning from the teacher. But no parent believes this about his/her child. So Mardirosian's strategy is to use parent power to bear in a collaborative way on the teacher. "If you tell a parent that her sixth-grade child is reading at a second-grade level, she will stand up, take notice, and want to know what she can do."

Mardirosian trains teachers to work with parents in any of the schools in San Diego, whether heavily Hispanic or Asian, black or white. He has found the most successful teachers (1) understand the circumstances of poverty, (2) know the school system, (3) are willing to shut up (the lessons are an hour and a half and they shouldn't speak over half the time), and (4) finish the full course. But it is his major lessons to the parents that are most interesting, and apply as lessons to every parent everywhere: (1) make friends with the teacher, (2) visit the school and find out how the child is doing at least once a month, and (3) show the child that you care how well she/he does, that it matters to you.

Josephine Cruz is a parent of three children attending Sherman Elementary School in San Diego and someone who took Mardirosian's course in parenting. She says that it changed her life. She had not believed that a parent would be welcome in the schools or make a difference. "We had some parents who had never come to school . . . We all learned about the meaning of grades, what they could do for the student, and the rights parents have, and we had a session about communicating with the kids without yelling at them." She indicated another parent sitting nearby. "He didn't have that much patience with his child," she said. "Now he will listen when the child speaks." She has appeared before the school board and feels strongly able to help her children, as well as being sensitized to their feelings about school. She even thinks that the parent teaching program has helped the teachers. She talked about one teacher who had a slow learner in her class, one who used to cry because she could not answer the questions asked her. The teacher did not recommend that the child be placed in a special class, as Ms. Cruz thought would have happened in the past, but instead decided to teach the child herself, and is having some success.

"We had some parents who had never come to school."

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- ✎ Do a self-examination. Are you doing everything you can at home to support your child's schooling?

Sometimes it is hard to see a connection between what happens at home and what happens in school. But the truth is, nearly everything families do or say affects how our children progress in school. Research has shown that parents' high expectations for their children's success and attention from the family at home significantly contribute to the likelihood that a child will remain in school and attain an occupational goal. One father who lived with his teenage son and daughter in a drug-infested inner-city neighborhood, told this story.

"I've got to tell you what happened to me last week."

"I've got to tell you what happened to me last week," he started as his parenting class was just beginning to quiet down to listen to a guest speaker. "You know, when we heard last week's speaker say that we should be hugging and touching our kids and telling them that we loved them, I thought he was nuts. My kids are teenagers and I for sure didn't want my son to think I was acting 'strange' around him. But I want so much to do what is right. So I took a chance and I called my kids over and put my arms around them both. They didn't know what to do, they kept squirming and yelling, 'What are you doing? What do you want?' So I told them. 'I want you to know that I love you.' They were shocked

because I've never done this before; in fact, I've had a hard time getting the words out before. But you know what? They said they loved me, too."

In Columbia, SC, this single parent, working two jobs and with custody of two teenagers for only two years at this point, was wondering why his one child was uncommunicative in school and having poor report cards. The father took the parenting class organized by the Columbia Collaborative seriously. He gave up his second job in order to spend more time with his children and he made it a policy to send both youngsters off to school with a hug and an "I love you" before they went out the door. He's convinced it's made all the difference. The one child is no longer unresponsive in school and grades for both teens have improved. The whole family unit is functioning better now.

Sending a child off to school ready to learn, in the right frame of mind, is important whether the student is a preschooler or a teenager. Follow up by providing a time and place for study and by asking each day about what happened in school. If you ask your child questions about school, he/she will feel more responsible about his/her job there. If you show your children that learning new things is important to you, learning will become important to them.

Think about whether enrolling in a workshop like the ones offered in Columbia or Los Angeles would help you be more supportive of your child's education. Then take a chance and sign up.

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- Ask yourself how much you want to be involved in your child's schooling. Could you be someone like Virginia Walker or Anna Rodriguez, just waiting for the right moment? Could now be the right moment?

"Now, parent meetings fill up early. One meeting during Black History Week turned out to be standing room only."

Virginia Walker was raised in a small town where the teachers "came to dinner" and she wanted something like that when the eldest of her three daughters was transferred to Columbia Park Elementary School in Prince George's County, MD. But when she and other parents showed up in school one day to find out what it was like, they were ordered to go home. Things didn't really get better until a new principal showed up and the school became involved in the Comer process—a technique developed by Yale's James Comer to involve parents in decision-making and management of the schools. At the time her daughter had an unsupportive teacher who finally decided that her daughter couldn't go on a field trip because she would be too much trouble. "I was fed up," Ms. Walker recalled, "and I went in and told the teacher my daughter would be going on the trip and, further, I would be sending her grandmother and my cousin as supervisors [I couldn't go because I was pregnant]." After that the teacher became more cooperative, treating Ms. Walker as a team member for the first time, and Ms. Walker's daughter showed a 100 percent improvement in grades, attitude and even handwriting.

Spurred on by the new principal's "can do" attitude, Ms. Walker became vice president of the PTA and is on the Comer school management team. With the support of the principal, the parents' group has won many changes, including weekly grading for the kindergarten and first-grade kids and biweekly for the others. Together, parents and teachers and administrators have won a battle with the town and got a traffic light put up at the intersection in front of the school. Now, parent meetings fill up early. One meeting during Black History Week turned out to be standing room only. "You can see the love they have for the children," Ms. Walker says of the staff. "They hug and kiss them when they leave school. Sometimes I have to wait twenty minutes for my kids after school

because every kid has to have their hug and then lots of them come to me for another hug."

Sometimes, parental involvement can make a huge difference for the parent as well as for the school. Anna Rodriguez had one semester of post-high school education before becoming involved as president of the PTA at I.G. Conchos Elementary School in Phoenix, AZ. A new principal had come to this school, where parental involvement of any serious sort was unheard of, and she approached Anna to run for president. It was a case of perfect synchronicity. Ms. Rodriguez was ready. She didn't want to supervise bake sales, she wanted to make a difference. She learned how to do that with the help of the local university's Parents as Partners program which gave her tips on how to run effective PTA meetings. Then she used her own ideas and the old once-every-two-months PTA meetings devoted to setting up candy sales became twice-a-month meetings dealing with such things as the GED and turning empty homes into low-income housing. Now, between 30 and 50 parents attend each meeting.

"Parents don't understand how much power they have. We can make a difference if we really try."

A striking case of school-parent collaboration occurred last year when the new principal asked Ms. Rodriguez and others to be part of the process of hiring a new vice principal and part of an even more sweeping process that brought in seven new teachers and got rid of a few teachers who were just around for their paychecks. Now Ms. Rodriguez goes to staff meetings, special meetings about learning styles, and school board meetings. "I go to the school board meetings and I am very vocal. I confront them. Parents don't understand how much power they have. We can make a difference if we really try." As for herself, she has decided to go back to college and get her degree in education.

So what else can you, as a parent, do tomorrow? Why not call a few parents you think might agree with you that your school needs some parental involvement. Set up a meeting. At the meeting, talk about problems you know about from your children, some reasonable goals, and some allies who may already be in the school system. Get a plan. Then consider getting other members of the community involved—particularly businesspersons who would be respected by the school people in your town. You may be on your way to the formation of a community-school collaboration.

And, no, you don't personally have to be the leadership figure if you don't see yourself in that role. It's enough that you had the sense to get this thing started and that you have the will power to see it through.

"It occurred to me about then that 'they' is us."

What can you do as a businessperson in your community? The first thing you should know is that the fact of your being a businessperson in the community gives you clout with the school board, and with the schools. In a sense, they think of you as the consumer of the ultimate product of schooling—an educated young American.

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- How long has it been since you spent a half day or longer in a school in your community? Particularly if you are worried about what's happening to kids in school today, tomorrow might be a good time to make plans to visit and have a look at your future workforce.

Savannah, GA, is a city fortunate enough to have landed a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which has funded a number of American cities for school improvement and reform projects. More importantly, Savannah was a bit better prepared than some of the other cities for the influx of funding and the changes it would bring about. About the time the grant was being finalized, Bill Sprague Jr., head of Savannah Foods, heard about it from another chief executive officer in a Savannah business.

"Until then, I was just another businessman going around saying that 'they' were not doing a good job of education in the Savannah schools," Sprague recalls. "I thought about it in terms of my own business. Thirty years ago, I expect the dropout rate was worse than it is now, but on the other hand, you didn't need an education to get a job. Now, the functional illiterates that apply to Savannah Foods don't get employment at all. I worried about that."

He was asked to serve on the group forming the community-school collaboration that was needed to get Savannah the $10 million Casey grant. He began to look around the schools in the city and found out that 42.5 percent of the kids in the sixth grade were at least one year behind academically and that 18 percent were two grades behind. He also discovered that a typical senior class in high school was about half the size of the freshman class and that 34 percent of the girls either had a child or were pregnant. "The statistics were pretty bad and they galvanized us," he says.

About that time he realized, looking around at the faces in the collaborative, that the "they" he kept referring to in his little story about the failure of the schools were actually "us." Sprague and others visited the Boston Compact, where contracts between businesses and schools were signed in the early 1980s calling for the schools to improve the students' basic skills in return for jobs guaranteed by industry. He learned how difficult school reform actually is, how much resistance it can encounter in the community. He also began to look at school problems in a different way. It was clear that schools were big business. They had to handle 32,000 students and 300-odd buses. There was a $155 million budget with a school superintendent in charge whose training was not in transportation or food supplies. Sprague thought it would be a good idea to look at schools as a corporation and find people who could deal with these problems so that the educators could spend more time on the primary business of schools—education. They also ought to have hiring and firing authority at the building level, he thought.

One thing led to another and Sprague became an ardent spokesman for school change. Now he speaks here and there in Savannah, often as much as once a week, on the subject. The experience has made him more sympathetic to the plight of the educators and more determined to do something to lift Savannah's educational effort to a higher plateau.

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- Talk to your peers. Help them see the connection between good schools and a good workforce and get their commitment to support higher educational goals for the entire community.

John Dashler was president of Unituft in Dalton, GA, in 1983 when the Whitefield County Board of Education decided to "go public" and tell the community about its educational problems. The largest problem was a 50-percent dropout rate precipitated, in part, by the hiring practices of many local firms that had no high school diploma requirements. "At the request of the local Chamber of Commerce, I started a High School Dropout Committee," says Dashler. "We convinced people that the dropout situation was a problem for the whole community, not just a problem for the school system. One of our most effective programs was Education Is E$$ential, a five-part plan for the business community. Two-person teams of businesspersons called on the business leaders and showed them how the dropout problem was affecting their business. We convinced them to adopt a pledge, to refuse to hire anyone without a high school diploma, to hire school-age persons part-time only, to support education, to recognize in a special way employees who earn a GED and their children who graduate from high school.

"We convinced people that the dropout situation was a problem for the whole community, not just a problem for the school system."

"We found that teenagers began returning to school and in three years' time the attendance doubled in adult learning centers. Two businesses brought instructors into the workplace to teach basic education to the employees. At my plant we recognized every GED recipient during work hours with a special ceremony and a $50 check. The employee turnover rate dropped precipitously at my plant and most others. We have given thousands of our citizens a dose of self-esteem, along with a new educational opportunity."

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- If any collaboration group is in existence, join it; let it be known that you will put in some of your own time gladly and unselfishly. If nothing like a collaborative is in the works, you might consider doing what Roger Breezely in Portland and John Pepper in Cincinnati did, where business-persons began community-wide collaboratives as described in our Gold Card section of this guide.

Roger Breezely is really the top business leader on the Portland Investment project," says Ben Whitely of Standard Insurance Company. "He has set an example for the rest of us to follow. The symbolism of my participation is as important as anything specifically that I do. I try to back Roger up."

"I think business can and must serve as both a support system and as a prod, or even nuisance, to force school systems to focus on student outcomes and to accelerate the pace of education reform and improvement."

Whitely sees the collaborative as a way of focusing both the financial and human resources of the community to help assure the development of a qualified workforce. "This is the first time we have had a unified effort by the city, the schools, and the state agencies. It's helping us get beyond turfism, and the business community is helping to provide a necessary oversight role."

Bill Prows of US West, formerly Northwestern Bell, participates for similar reasons. "We were faced with the situation that fifty percent of the applicants taking our initial test in math and problem solving couldn't pass the test. They'd never make it to the interview. After a while it became obvious that each of the major employers in the area were literally stealing each other's workers because there wasn't an adequate supply of qualified workers." Prows' firm has contributed $30,000 in scholarships connected with a project aimed at enticing minority students with 2.5 or better grade point averages to stay in school.

Similarly in Cincinnati, business participation goes far beyond John Pepper's initiating role. One third of a steering committee of 40 to 45 persons comes from business, and business leaders head nearly all of the dozen or so subcommittees of the steering group.

Pepper's associate R.L. Wehling has described one of the roles of business this way: "While this is argumentative, I think business can and must serve as both a support system and as a prod, or even nuisance, to force school systems to focus on student outcomes and to accelerate the pace of education reform and improvement. This is a delicate balance and I suspect all of us have erred on both sides. School systems often plead to move more slowly and cautiously, and they are often willing to find reasonable justifications for the lack of dramatic improvement in student results. The action orientation and end-result focus of business can often cause friction in this environment, but I think this healthy debate and the friction often helps both groups to meet in the middle."

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- Almost every community has some mentoring going on. You could find out tomorrow who to call about offering to meet with, work with, and get to know a young man or woman in the schools who may need you more than you can possibly guess.

Mentoring provides an opportunity to become involved in the schools and, at the same time, to have an immediate impact on the lives of kids who are missing the kind of relationship with an adult that is so important in the growing-up process. In San Diego, we visited the Bandini Alternative School and lunched with a group of men who were on a one-on-one relationship with high school youths. One of the mentors was Matt Giacolone, a former tuna fisherman turned real estate salesman. His charge was Chris Dorsey, a part-Indian youth of 16. We excerpted the conversation below from our notes. As you will see, Matt and Chris are talking partly to each other and partly to the rest of the group.

Matt: I'm a frustrated teacher. And I've got kids of my own coming up and they are going to be mixing in with Chris and lots of other kids and I want to be part of helping all that out.

Chris: Yeah, he's a big help. I don't have anyone else I can talk with about girls, for instance. That's not something I want to talk with my mother about . . . . (Matt listens.)

Matt: Not that my advice is that good . . . (laughs).

Chris: We're a lot alike in one way. I was brought up on an Indian reservation and Matt was alone on a boat for a long time. You know, we were both out of it for a while . . . .

Matt: Chris is interested in anthropology and I'm into real estate, so you can see we've got a lot in common.

Chris: (to a question about whether the approaching end of the school year would end their relationship) No. I don't think so. Do you, Matt?

Matt: No. I wouldn't think so. We spend a lot of our time together over the phone anyway. And we might even have more time for the other things we do together. Ball games and such.

Chris: (to a question about how early in a young man's life a mentor like Matt might be useful) I'd say from about ten years old, somewhere in there . . . .

Matt: (chiming in) I agree. But if you want to reach the younger kids, you have to do it through the whole family. I see a good bit of Chris's family but that's not quite as important now as it would have been five [or] six years ago. He's beginning the breaking away from the family process at 16.

You are a significant other if you are a piano tuner or a househusband, a churchgoer, a postman, a social worker, a police officer, a health club (or any other kind of club) member, a seamstress or a shoe salesman, a butcher, baker, candlestick maker, or anyone else who might care about what goes on in the schools we all use to educate our children. You're a significant other even if you don't have children of your own.

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- Does your position within your community give you a unique opportunity to create greater awareness and collaboration around school issues? If you are an elected official in a small town or a large city, you may be able to push a community-school agenda to the forefront of the local action agenda.

In 1989 when Norm Rice ran for mayor of Seattle, he promised, "My first action as mayor . . . will be to call a Seattle Schools Summit. I want to bring together parents, teachers, school officials, business, labor . . . to hammer out a consensus program that will improve our schools, give parents more certainty, and avoid costly and counterproductive court battles."

"The summit was a community agenda-setting process," says Linda Thompson-Black, Rice's education liaison. "The mayor's major contribution was that he brought about a cogent community agenda that allowed everyone to agree on priorities. The schools couldn't have done what we did even if they wanted to. If they tried, they wouldn't have time to teach."

About a month after taking office, Rice created "the Gang of Eighty," representing every interested agency and organization, to help prepare for the summit. Ms. Thompson-Black explains, "We decided early on that we wanted to talk about improving education. Some thought we should talk about drug abuse and teenage pregnancy, and those kinds of issues, but you can solve the drug abuse and teenage pregnancy problems and continue to have educational problems. To get change in the quality of education, you have to focus on the business of schools." The "gang" set out procedures for making sure that the process was inclusionary and an action plan relating to the needs of all children would be generated.

The next step was to convene 31 community meetings across the city in April 1990 (2,000 people attended) to identify pressing issues. The summit itself came in May—two days of brainstorming by 350 community leaders and elected officials on the points raised by the community meetings.

Although it is young, Seattle's model is rapidly becoming a full-blown community-school collaboration with a highly organized committee structure and action plan. Seattle's model is being adapted by the Council of Great City Schools for a national urban education summit to take place in Washington, DC, in early 1991. Several cities are planning replications as well.

"If mayors aren't aware and aren't keeping in touch with what's happening in cities about children in schools, they aren't in touch with their constituencies."

- Think about how your work may relate to what's going on in the public schools and then ask yourself if you can make a connection.

"I never thought I'd be saying this, but this project has made me feel more patriotic than anything I've done in my life."

Harry Miller and Judith Hastings, both academic deans, worried about how few women were involving themselves in technical courses at the Vermont Technical College in Randolph, VT, in the early 1980s. A small committee decided to put on a statewide conference for teachers, businesspersons and professional agencies to talk about the problem. Sally Ride, the astronaut, gave the keynote address and the college came up with the idea of a statewide program to promote sex equity in math and sciences.

"What came next was the hard part," says Jennifer Williams who was brought on board by Miller and Hastings. The college began working with a group of 40 advisors over the state, people stretching from elementary school to college. A statewide speakers' bureau made up of women in a variety of math and science careers traveled to schools to talk. Shadow days were set up on the VTC campus and workplaces for girls interested in exploring technical careers. Finally a summer math and science camp was designed for ninth- and 10th-grade girls. After two summers, a federal grant was secured to expand the camp's recruiting capacity and increase accessibility to disadvantaged students.

The arms of this collaboration stretch wide, from the schools to the colleges to the Girl Scouts—who are running an after-school program for scouts in grades four through six involving hands-on experience with computers and robots. Summer camp enrollment is up to 86; another 26 girls in grades eight through 10 attended a four-day follow-up residential math and science institute for previous campers this year. The program is statewide but going regional. In 1988 it won the Progress in Equity Award of the American Association of University Women Educational Fund.

"I never thought I'd be saying this," Ms. Williams says, "but this project has made me feel more patriotic than anything I've done in my life. It makes me want to get on a soap box and say to America, 'WAKE UP! Don't you remember what it was like when Sputnik went up?' It's the same thing all over again now. This is a national crisis. This is our future we are talking about and we are short-changing ourselves by half by not encouraging our girls to use their brains to solve math and science problems."

"I wasn't sure how to make a difference. I was single with no kids. What could I do?"

Quincey Pugh, young, black, single, and of all things, a public librarian, wanted to support the efforts of the Columbia (SC) Collaborative, but thought perhaps the most he could do was volunteer as a mentor. In time, however, he found some other ways to contribute.

"The more time I spent around young people in the program, the more I knew I had something to offer them. I volunteered to let them come to the library and do job shadowing with me so they could learn about my job and also see what a library is all about. Libraries ought to be a place for helping kids get tutoring help. I want to try to start something like that here."

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

✎ See if you can make a difference somewhere, using whatever it is that sets you off as someone special.

Police officer Randy Podobinski was pleased that he and other members of the Fayetteville, NC, police force were involved with the kids of Pauline Jones Elementary School. He knew these kids were from families that knew poverty and hard times and that they needed encouraging. He wanted to do a little more than show up with the other policemen and do the search dog show in the auditorium or the horse show out in the park. He wanted to make a difference. He asked Principal Lisa Carter about it and she suggested that they see about adopting him. It sounded a little strange, but then, corporations were adopting schools these days, why not a school adopting a policeman? Adopt-a-cop. It had a ring to it.

"The ceremony concluded with the students presenting Officer Podobinski with flowers, a school sweatshirt, and a poster signed by everyone in school."

So Officer Podobinski showed up in Courtroom 2-A of the Cumberland County Courthouse as instructed. The Honorable Jim Ammons, presiding as judge, heard a petition for adoption presented by the students and staff. "We believe that, as our adopted officer, Randy Podobinski would serve as an excellent role model for our students, promote positive school-community relations, be a support to our students and staff, and serve as an excellent liaison between our school and the Fayetteville Police Department." The judge pondered the matter for some moments while the students squirmed in their courtroom seats. "Do you promise to look after him and help him as your adopted law officer?," he asked the students. "I do," they responded. "Do you promise to be open and honest with him?" Again: "I do." Then Officer Podobinski solemnly and sincerely promised to be at all times by acts, deeds and demeanor, a good example for the students and a good role model too. The judge pronounced the adoption completed. Now "Officer Randy," as the students call him, spends a lot of time at the school with the kids and is pointed out on the streets by children to their parents as "our policeman."

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

✎ Are you still young enough that school-aged youngsters think you are one of them? Can you talk to them and reach them in ways older adults can't?

By the time she became a junior, it was apparent that Virginia Torres was one of the luckier Latino girls attending UCLA. "A lot of my friends at college weren't making it because they were so unprepared for the academics and the social life on campus. It was very different from what we experienced in our neighborhoods when we were growing up and lots of the girls were unhappy. In our culture, many girls do not have high self-esteem. We aren't proud of who we are. I thought maybe I could help if I went back to my high school to talk to some of the younger students, to give them an idea of what college would be like and to tell them that they could be successful if they were prepared."

"A lot of my friends at college weren't making it because they were so unprepared for the academics and social life on campus."

With the help of another student and the community program officer at UCLA, Ms. Torres founded Latinas Guiding Latinas, a student-operated mentoring program that won her a 1990 Student Humanitarian Service Award. The program utilized 80 college volunteers who worked with 38 elementary girls, 50 junior high girls, and 40 high school girls and their parents—levels four to 12. Quarterly activities in the schools plus biweekly big sister/little sister contacts were designed to help girls as well as their teachers and families come to expect that college would be in the girls' futures.

"We geared our activities to the specific school levels. We had girls do books on their future, we took them to the UCLA campus, and we had parent conferences to tell parents of elementary girls how they could improve their daughters' learning environment. At the junior high school we told girls what the requirements for college were and we taught them study skills. Sometimes we brought in professional women as speakers." Ms. Torres says there has already been a noticeable change among the younger girls. They are able to talk more specifically about career interests and they are more confident and outspoken about their post-high school dreams. As for Ms. Torres, she is now a first-year math teacher in Los Angeles.

We have saved students for last, not because they are least, but because they are the most. If they are not what all of the preceding is about, we are wasting our time. If we are talking about collaboration, we are talking about student involvement, nothing less. Student involvement in improving learning gets input from the learner, which, as any good teacher knows, is critical. The student voices you will hear in this section are typical of the many being raised—often for the first time—around the country.

Let's start with a few from a statewide youth speakout at the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School in Columbia, SC, co-sponsored by the South Carolina Department of Youth Services' "Columbia Youth: Year 2000 Project" and the Columbia Collaborative. Speakouts have been used in South Carolina and elsewhere to help young people identify common problems and determine appropriate solutions where they can play a role. Run by youth, for youth, speakouts often surface emotions and ideas that surprise adult observers.

"I'm bored, bored to tears. Some days I get up and I dread going to school 'cause I know I'm going to be bored all day. And a lot of times I don't learn as much as I would if I paid attention. Most of the teachers in most of the schools I've been in probably don't care enough to get involved in what they're teaching. I can't respect someone that doesn't care about what they're doing. Then I don't get respect back because I'm not interested . . . I do like to learn things. I don't hate school. I just hate the approach."

"I think students drop out of school 'cause they don't have the self-esteem; they don't think they have the ability or the confidence to make it in school. If they fail a test or something, then they get discouraged and they think they can't do it."

"If you and your folks are fighting and you do something like leave the TV on all night and your mother tells you something like if you do anything like that again you're gonna be sent off . . . to a boys' home, then school's not really gonna matter to you 'cause you'll have your mind on the fight you had. And you'll be wondering what will happen if you do anything wrong. If you don't get along with your parents, you aren't gonna do well in school 'cause your mind's not going to be on schoolwork."

"There was a story in a newspaper or something not too long ago where a book on sexual education was reviewed by a council and they decided that the section on birth control was immoral, so they took it out of the book . . . That's the part kids need most. Yeah, I guess they figured if they didn't include the birth control section, you wouldn't want to have sex."

"When I tried to commit suicide, I had just broken up with my boyfriend and I wasn't doing too good in school. I didn't have anyone to talk with and I just didn't know what to do . . . Two weeks ago my girlfriend just upped and stopped talking to anybody and then yesterday she wrote me a letter about wanting to commit suicide. So I wrote her back and told her I couldn't believe she'd do that after she saw how much pain I had caused my family when I tried it. I had always told her that I would always be there for her to talk to if she wanted to, but I guess that one time she didn't think I would."

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

✎ Get together to deal as a group of students with a commonly felt problem.

"She is our inspiration. She is our Escalante."

A California school in a predominantly white area was about to release the school's only minority counselor. Hispanic and black students bussed into the school area were up in arms about it, but they did not know what to do. Most did not think that they could do anything to save this individual. They felt the loss because most of the other students were in the college core program and this counselor was the only one who "belonged" to them. A group of them went to an adult friend, someone in education who was not involved in that school and whom they trusted. She gave them this general advice.

1. Get together first with the group of students affected and try to agree on what the specific complaint is and what you would like to see done about it.

2. Try to get your parents involved, or a group of parents you think would at least be sympathetic to your position.

3. See if any school officials seem to be sympathetic. You may have to decide whether or not they should come forward for you publicly or simply stay in the background as support to avoid jeopardizing their own jobs.

4. With adult help, try to get enough information to make your case. (The students in this California school, for instance, could get statistics on the number of minority counselors in the school system or the state to compare with the situation in their own school.)

5. Write a simple document setting forth the complaint. Avoid personal complaints—this teacher did this to this student—and stick to the larger problem.

6. Present your written complaint, which is now a "document," to the appropriate person in the school system and prepare yourself for a session in which you will have to defend your position and listen to arguments from the other side—every argument has at least two sides.

In the case above, the students got themselves a five-minute slot before the school board. They presented their "document" which said in part: "Is this school system really about students? We are not dropouts and we are not on drugs. We are young people who believe in ourselves and owe a great deal to —. She is our inspiration. She is our Escalante."

The counselor in question was kept in the school, although her time was split with one other school.

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

✎ Speak up for yourself firmly, calmly and sensibly whenever you can. Try to help create situations where you and other students are allowed to speak your minds.

"The kids were more honest than the adults."

Rockford, IL, originally had planned to hold one town meeting at which they would hear from some high school students along with a number of adults. The kids told them after that first meeting that comments made by

adults had angered them and that they felt overshadowed by the adult speakers. So Rockford decided to have a second summit meeting, this time involving only the high school students. This was better, but it was pointed out that only in-school students had been chosen to speak. At the third summit, a more representative sample of students of high school age was developed.

While the adults in the first summit were willing to give the school system an "Incomplete" for effort in dealing with such problems as functional illiteracy, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, youth unemployment and dropouts, the students graded the school system "F." The adults were saying that they were putting out the effort, but the kids were saying that so far the effort hadn't reached them. "The kids were more honest than the adults," said Gwen Robinson, director of the Human Resources Department for the City of Rockford.

Ms. Robinson points out that these youth summits or speakouts have had a real effect on how the community is responding to the problems. The city funded, for the first time, a youth home for pregnant teens and built a park for the little kids, while youth and adults are on a planning committee for a teen park. The school district has been investigating the prospect of establishing a community education program and has decided to hire a minority community relations person to oversee in-service training and develop parent groups. "This is an excellent model for smaller communities," says Ms. Robinson. It sounds to us like the beginning of a community-school collaborative in Rockford, as well.

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

✎ Ask yourself what you can do to help a friend or another student make it through school.

In Birmingham, AL, community education staff rely on a core of 25 to 30 students at each of three high schools to identify problems students are having in school and to come up with solutions for the problems. The advisory committees meet once a week after school, doing their homework first and then getting down to business. Valerie Whit wasn't one of the first students to participate, but she became one of the most active once she joined.

"I'm not sure that I would have made it through high school if it hadn't been for the 'club'."

"One of my teachers recruited me for the 'club' because she knew I was having trouble trying to cope with school and the demands my baby was putting on me. We talked about teenage pregnancy in our group and decided that we would start a Young Parents Club so that girls with babies would have someone to talk to about their problems. I joined that club and it helped me a lot. I learned things like how to deal with my baby when she wakes up at 3:00 a.m. and just wants to play. I didn't know how to deal with that before and I wasn't getting enough rest for school.

"We've done other things, too. We wanted to get students better informed about AIDS so we arranged for some speakers to come to a school assembly and we also did some one-on-one counseling. Another time we decided that we needed a tutoring program to help kids who were close to dropping out. We set it up so that there are five tutors for each subject three days a week after school. All the tutors are students, too."

Staff at the schools explained that students on the advisory councils represent a cross section of the student bodies and each member relates to a different network of students in the schools. When Ms. Whit's council decided to start a one-on-one drug abuse counseling program, the plan was for every council member to contact students in his or her circle of friends to see if they needed

help with a substance abuse problem. However, Valerie decided to personally contact everyone in school and over a few months she did just that. "I'd ask them if they were using drugs and if they said yes, then I would try to tell them how they were harming themselves. I also told them that I wished they would stop using drugs. I got to over 200 students before the end of the year and some of them seemed to appreciate my concern.

"I'm not sure that I would have made it through high school if it hadn't been for the 'club.' It started out small but over the long time what we do makes a difference. Once we adopted a baby of a mother who was using drugs and we gave Christmas presents to the baby. We never did get to meet the baby, but we knew we were helping someone that needed it." Ms. Whit graduated last June and is a freshman at Jefferson State Junior College in Birmingham. Her daughter is three years old.

"We sent out really fancy, computer-generated invitations to the kids and told them we wanted them to talk about how to make the school a better place."

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- Be willing to work as hard to help the school help you as you do on your own coursework. Don't be afraid to put in extra hours—this is part of your education.

At Canton Central High School in St. Lawrence County, NY, high school students were selected at random to attend a youth summit. Sessions were held during the school day and the school provided lunch and had a couple of the kids' favorite faculty members on hand. The kids worked in small groups and came up with what Larry Casey, a guidance counselor, considered excellent suggestions about rules that could be changed. The students expressed themselves as anxious to play a bigger role in selecting their teachers and courses. The group of 60 to 80 high school students wanted to meet once a month, but the school couldn't handle that much with its present faculty—at this time, the sessions are running three times a year.

WHAT CAN I DO TOMORROW?

- Remember that nobody can do it for you. It is all up to you. You can make up your mind to succeed. Why not begin tomorrow?

"It all begins with you and your family."

Nora Moreno is the youngest of seven Mexican-American children to attend Banning High School in Los Angeles, CA. With her graduation this year, all seven of the Moreno children become graduates. One is managing a credit union, three are teaching, one is going to a local college and a community college to get his license as a contractor, another is an exchange student in Puerto Rico, and Nora is enrolled in engineering school.

She talks about her family's determination that the children get educations. Her mother and father were born in Mexico and her father worked briefly in California and determined that his children would be educated there. The family moved to California primarily for that purpose. "We had it in our heads from the earliest age that it was up to us to take advantage of the opportunity we had. Our parents didn't say—you have to go to school because we say so, the way a lot of parents do. They would say, look around you and see who is succeeding and who is struggling and make up your own minds who you want to be. That was very helpful to all of us. We all had the idea that we were expected to do well. So that when we had the program that Ms. Hart [Phyllis Hart] and Ms. Monahan [Helen Monahan] had developed to help minority kids get into college, we were ready. We expected to succeed and we did. I give our parents a lot of credit for that."

APPENDICES

There are many resources to turn to for more information on collaborative strategies and for help on implementing community- wide change. To those who are ready to learn more, we suggest the following:

APPENDIX A

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Call one or more of the experienced collaborators who helped us prepare this guide. Those who are willing to take your calls and letters are listed here.

BIRMINGHAM, AL
Peggy F. Sparks
Director of Community Education
Davis Center
417 29th Street South
Birmingham, AL 35233
(205) 583-4776

CINCINNATI, OH
John Bryant
Executive Director
Cincinnati Youth Collaborative
250 East Fifth Street
Cincinnati, OH 45202
(513) 621-0033

COLUMBIA, SC
Norma Higgins
PO Box 21011
Columbia, SC 29211
(803) 772-7622

DAYTON, OH
Kathy Emory, Executive Director
New Futures Board
400 Miami Valley Tower
40 West 4th Street
Dayton, OH 45402
(513) 223-6323

DES MOINES, IA
Kevin Koester
Director of Community Education
Ankeny Community School
306 Southwest School Street
Ankeny, IA 50021-0189

FAYETTEVILLE, NC
Rosie Bullard
STAR/RJR Nabisco Grant
Project Manager
Douglas Byrd Junior High School
1616 Ireland Drive
Fayetteville, NC 28304
(919) 483-3101

FORWARD IN THE FIFTH, KY
JoAnne James
Chairman
Forward in the Fifth
433 Chestnut Street
Berea, KY 40403
(606) 986-3696

LOS ANGELES, CA
Phyllis Hart
Project Coordinator
The Achievement Council
4055 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 350
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 487-3194

MCDOWELL COUNTY, NC
Rod Birdsong
Executive Director
Chamber of Commerce
Marion, NC 28752
(704) 652-4240

Dean Gouge
Dropout Prevention Coordinator
McDowell County Schools
PO Box 130
Marion, NC 28752
(704) 724-9505

PORTLAND, OR
Marcia Douglas
City-School Liaison
The Portland Investment
1220 Southwest Fifth Ave., Room 209
Portland, OR 97204-1978
(503) 243-7912

SAN DIEGO, CA
Jeanne Jehl
Administrator on Special Assignment
San Diego City Schools
4100 Normal Street
San Diego, CA 92103
(619) 293-8371

SAVANNAH, GA
Otis Johnson
Executive Director
Chatham-Savannah Youth
Futures Authority
PO Box 10212
Savannah, GA 31402
(912) 235-3505

For additional ideas on specific programs that link education and human service systems to help children and families at risk, contact this clearinghouse:

Joining Forces
379 Hall of the States
400 North Capitol Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 393-8159

If you want to review other manuals on collaboration, we suggest:

The Community Collaboration Manual by the National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, Inc., 1319 F Street, NW, Suite 601, Washington, DC 20004
(202) 347-2080

What It Takes: Connecting Children and Families with Comprehensive Services by the Institute for Educational Leadership, et al., 1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 310, Washington, DC 20036-5541 (202) 822-8405

Other organizations that are working in this field and that may be able to share information and ideas include:

Julie Thomasson/David Dodson
MDC, Inc.
1717 Legion Road
P.O. Box 2226
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
(919) 968-4531
➡ *(Community-level leadership training for social change)*

Education Commission of the States
707 17th Street, Suite 2700
Denver, CO 80204
(303) 299-3600
➡ *(Particularly state-level policy and strategies)*

National Conference of State Legislatures
1560 Broadway, Suite 700
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 830-2200
➡ *(Ask about the ECS/NCSL study on state-level collaboration strategies.)*

National Community Education Assoc.
801 North Fairfax, Suite 209
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 683-0161
➡ *(Good resource on ways to get broad-based community involvement to increase academic achievement and improve school climate)*

The Family Resource Coalition
230 North Michigan Avenue
Suite 1625
Chicago, IL 60601
(312) 726-4750
➡ *(Particularly good on ways to build support and resources that empower families and enhance the capacities of parents)*

The Center for Early Adolescence/ UNC Chapel Hill
Carr Mill Mall
Carboro, NC 27510
(919) 966-1148
➡ *(Middle school achievement issues)*

The Academy for Education Development
1255 23rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037
(202) 862-1900
➡ *(General information)*

National Coalition for an Urban Children's Agenda
c/o National Assoc. of State Boards of Education
1012 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-4000
➡ *(Collaborative interagency models of service delivery)*

Children's Defense Fund
122 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 628-8787
➡ *(Improving the quality of schools and building parent and community support for achievement)*

Child and Family Policy Center
100 Court Avenue, Suite 312
Des Moines, IA 50309
(515) 243-2000
➡ *(Especially state policy on collaborating to meet children's needs)*

Coalition of Essential Schools
Education Department
Brown University
Box 1938
Providence, RI 02912
(401) 863-3384
➡ *(Curriculum issues)*

If you are interested in learning more about how social action (community change) takes place, contact:

James Godwin
1034 Quail Run, Apt. C
Columbia, SC 29206
(803) 787-5702
➸ *(Ask about his use of Extension Service and other change models)*

Curt Johnson
United Way of America
701 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2045
➸ *(Ask about the Compass system for conducting community needs assessment)*

Charles F. Kettering Foundation
100 Commons Road
Dayton, OH 45459-2777
➸ *(Ask for information on community leadership)*

APPENDIX B

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University of Wisconsin

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San Diego, CA

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San Diego, CA

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Cullowhee, NC

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Portland, OR

Quincey Pugh
Richland County Public Library
Columbia, SC

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San Diego, CA

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Seattle, WA

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American Red Cross
Washington, DC

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Savannah, GA

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Schools, MD

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APPENDIX C

REALIZING AMERICA'S HOPE VIDEO AND PRINT COMPONENTS

VIDEO PRODUCTIONS

All Our Children with Bill Moyers, produced by Public Affairs Television, 90 minutes. Moyers and his colleagues examine the efforts of several programs and schools across the country which are achieving small victories in the lives of those young people who have known defeat.

Responding to 'All Our Children'—Bill Moyers Live from Longstreet Theatre, produced by South Carolina ETV, 60 minutes. Representatives from education, business, government and the family engage in lively discussion with journalist Bill Moyers in response to the challenges facing the nation's youth described in the Moyers' documentary, **All Our Children with Bill Moyers**.

Investing in Our Youth: A Nationwide Committee of the Whole, produced by South Carolina ETV, 120 minutes. This two-hour teleconference aimed at state legislators demonstrated how collaborative strategies are proving to be highly cost-effective by cutting through bureaucratic red tape while serving clients more effectively.

Making the American Dream Work for Our Children: A New Vision of School Guidance, produced by South Carolina ETV, 60 minutes. This teleconference demonstrates how schools and businesses are being drawn into the school guidance process in order to better serve the nation's young people.

Investing in Our Youth, produced by South Carolina ETV, 30 minutes. Half-hour documentary edited from case studies produced for the legislators' teleconference, **Investing in Our Youth: A Nationwide Committee of the Whole**.

Making the American Dream Work for Our Children, produced by South Carolina ETV, 30 minutes. Half-hour documentary edited from the case studies produced for the guidance teleconference, **Making the American Dream Work for Our Children: A New Vision of School Guidance**.

PUBLICATIONS

Let's Do It Our Way: Working Together for Educational Excellence, by MDC, Inc. This handbook for everyone explains why it is important that all members of the community work with schools to educate young people and outlines step by step how to set up a collaborative.

Changing Delivery Systems: Addressing the Fragmentation of Children and Youth Services, by the Education Commission of the States and the National Conference of State Legislatures. This work describes collaborative strategies state agencies can use to improve youth services and stretch limited fiscal resources.

Guiding Youth to Success: What Schools and Communities Can Do?, by MDC, Inc. This book provides a vision of comprehensive guidance that involves parents and the community as well as the schools.

For copies of these productions or publications, contact:

REALIZING AMERICA'S HOPE
South Carolina ETV
P.O. Drawer L
Columbia, SC 29250
1-800-277-0829

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CHARLES STEWART
MOTT FOUNDATION